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**MODEL CITIZENS AND PERFECT STRANGERS: AMERICAN PAINTING AND ITS DIFFERENT MODES OF ADDRESS, 1958-1965**

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# MODEL CITIZENS AND PERFECT STRANGERS: AMERICAN PAINTING AND ITS DIFFERENT MODES OF ADDRESS, 1958-1965

by

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**MODEL CITIZENS AND PERFECT STRANGERS: AMERICAN PAINTING AND ITS DIFFERENT MODES OF ADDRESS, 1958-1965**

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Artworks made in New York between 1958 and 1965, the heyday of color-field painting, minimalism and pop art, comprise different responses to the perceived crisis embroiling advanced art at the time --namely, the threat of misinterpretation posed by a rapidly expanding consumer audience. It is possible to see the general concern over art's relation to its audience in terms of a crisis of metaphor; pivotal innovations during this period, especially in painting, mark a move beyond metaphor in search of alternative modes of address. These different modes can be characterized using the categories provided by rhetorical analysis, in particular the schema of the four master tropes as proposed by Kenneth Burke and Hayden White. For example, color-field painting can be thought of as synecdochic, minimalism as metonymic, and pop as ironic. All three offer strategies to ward off misappropriation: the first by disallowing any interpretive leeway, by shoring up all space between viewer and painting so that the encounter seems to happen within "eyesight alone," in the intimate proximity and instant of looking; the second involves giving the artworks over to viewing while also steeling them against it, so that only obdurate surface and irrefutable fact is presented; and the third involves artworks that advance more than one meaning, thus undercutting the authority of any one over another. By 1965 interchange between these modes comes to a halt, as arguments emerge that make differences between artistic viewpoints into stark polarities. Naming abusive acts of viewing each required an interpretative act of its own, which proved the self-same poetic essence of art to be a construction, one needing the advocacy and arguments of rhetoric.

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

**LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS**

19. French & Company advertisement, Arts Yearbook 3, 1959.

20. Kenneth Noland. Untitled. 1958-59. Acrylic on canvas. 84" x 84".

21. Kenneth Noland. Lunar Episode. 1959. Oil on canvas. 70 1/2" x 68 1/2".

22. Frank Stella. Plant City. 1963. Zinc chromate on canvas. 96" x 96".

23. Frank Stella. Installation view. Exhibition at Galerie Lawrence, Paris, April 1963.

# INTRODUCTION

If there has been a recent shift in critical method, it can perhaps be best characterized as a displacement from logical to rhetorical analysis, from a criticism concerned primarily or exclusively with the abstract truth or falsehood of statements, to one which deals with their use in specific social circumstances.... And insofar as rhetoric also specifies the proper use of contradictory expressions (such as metaphors) it is also the site of the ideological.

--Craig Owens, 1985(1)

What is missing in the current scene is more critical writing that knows how to mix its modes...such sophistication in practice across the whole rhetorical field is surely required if we are to follow the interplay between abstraction and local knowledge in the best work and to redeem the rest with some kind of common understanding.

--Thomas Crow, 1992(2)

This dissertation rests on the distinction between poetics and rhetoric. It is a distinction I believe to be important to the place, period and people I'm investigating: artists working in Manhattan in the late 1950s and early 1960s. But it is equally as important, if not more so, to myself as the investigator. Since 1983 I have worked as an art critic. And criticism can perhaps be considered an exemplary site where poetics and rhetoric, the object in itself versus its discursive appropriation, come into contact, even overlap, defining each other while also blurring and undermining those very definitions.

Having been a practicing critic for 20 years, of course I am going to see the work of art as a problem not of making and self-expression but of communication and reception. I have never been able to create a piece of writing for its own sake, or for my own sake; I have always dealt with editors, with the problem of intelligibility, with second-guessing over the reader's response. I then turn around and project such conditions onto the artworks I write about.

The moment I return to in this dissertation exists as much for me, within my own history, as it exists beyond me. As I look back to my own beginnings as a critic in 1983, the art criticism that dominated then, and from which I learned, was itself focused on the past; it likewise looked over its shoulder to a point 20 years earlier. A version of postmodernist criticism in the visual arts, fashioning itself as a rebuttal of a modernist viewpoint moribund since the mid '60s, was being officially codified; the anthology The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture, edited by Hal Foster, was published in 1983, followed a year later by another canonizing collection, Art after Modernism: Rethinking Representation, edited by Brian Wallis. Both volumes advance a schematic characterization of modernism to serve as their launching-off point, focusing on a Kantian notion of autonomously developing "spheres of culture" and how this notion was applied to "postwar or late modernism, with its stress on the purity of each art and the autonomy of

culture as a whole" (Foster).(3) The very title of Foster's compilation pairs the categories of modernism and aesthetics as together defining what it is the project of postmodernism aims to exceed. Wallis is more specific: in his introduction he names Clement Greenberg, Morris Louis and Kenneth Noland as exemplifying a modernism "constantly bound to its own formally reductive system."(4) In other words, the postmodernism that I was indoctrinated into imagined itself to be founded in opposition to the relatively late writings of Clement Greenberg and color-field painting--that is to say, its origins lie somewhere roughly between 1958 and 1960.

It is through such accounts as Foster's and Wallis's that I came to understand and to refer to modernism as a young critic, and by devoting this dissertation to the period leading up to and just after 1960, I am thus returning, in a sense, to the roots of my roots. But my goal is not to prove Wallis and Foster somehow wrong, or to replace their story with an entirely different one; I have grown perhaps too invested by now in the account they helped entrench. What I attempt instead is to tell the story a little more elaborately, and a little differently. The result, I hope, casts the period of the late '50s and early '60s--and the place of Greenberg, Louis and Noland within it--in a new light. Most of all, I would like to show how the modernism Greenberg and the two Washington D.C. painters came up with at the time was new even to them, something devised to a large degree in response to the quickly changing circumstances of the moment.

Of course, other scholars have already researched this "transitional" period in some depth. Two museum exhibitions in particular deserve mentioning: Barbara Haskell's "Blam! The Explosion of Pop, Minimalism, and Performance, 1958-1964," which opened at the Whitney Museum in 1984; and the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art's "Hand-Painted Pop: American Art in Transition, 1955-62," curated by Donna De Salvo and Paul Schimmel in 1992. Both exhibitions address, as does this dissertation, the aftermath of Abstract

Expressionism and what De Salvo and Schimmel call "the long and layered period of evolution which produced both Pop and other tendencies."(5) Taking a broader view, Haskell includes in her discussion not just pop but also assemblage, environments, Fluxus, minimalism and performance art. "Examining the emergence of these various styles synchronistically," she argues, "reveals the uniquely close interaction that existed between artists in all media during this period, an interdisciplinary exchange that exerted a critical impact on the evolution of the new aesthetic."(6) I adopt much the same approach in the following pages, arguing, for example, that color-field painting also interacted and overlapped with these other styles, sharing their allegiance to technical and formal innovation and their rejection of the previous generation's inward-turned existentialism and studio-based worker's mythos; color field, too, belongs to the period's "new aesthetic." Yet Haskell, like De Salvo and Schimmel, excludes Louis and Noland categorically; she explicitly brackets out "the Color Field and figurative painters" from "those artists whose shared origins and parallel ideologies formed an intellectually cohesive aesthetic."

Haskell is here only being typical of her postmodern moment. The reason she omits Louis and Noland is not because the two artists never embraced commercial iconography, or failed to renounce such traditional materials as paint and canvas. If these were her criteria, works by Jasper Johns, Frank Stella and Donald Judd wouldn't have been allowed in her show either. Rather, the most obvious reason for the exclusion of color-field painting has to do with the fact that Haskell mounted her show in 1984, during postmodernism's heyday, when modernism was being defined, and Louis and Noland with it, as belonging to a former world now superceded. Like Foster and Wallis, Haskell articulates a desired "break with modernism," and then projects it back onto the late 1950s.

Other strategies existed by which critics and historians in the early '80s separated out what Greenberg in 1960 called modernist painting, characterizing it as conservative, tradition-bound and elitist. One could, for example, emphasize Greenberg's own Cold Warrior politics (as does Serge Guilbault in his book How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art, published in 1983). In what follows, I don't wish to discount the rightward shift in Greenberg's political views during the '50s and '60s, nor the rarefied and exceptionalist tone that surrounded color field's initial critical reception. But I do not set these in diametric opposition to some counter-stance, at once progressive and populist, represented by Johns, Stella, Judd or other early avatars of pop and minimalism. Rather, I try to align all these artists as together confronting a new situation, a fundamental shift in the way art was thought to exist in the world--namely, that it exists outside of the studio, in public, with an audience always in front of it. What Dorothy Seckler announced in 1963 in reference to Allan Kaprow's happenings applied, in one way or another, to each of the artists I talk about: "It is only now that the artist is for the audience and not against it."(7)

This was the challenge, the dilemma, the condition underlying the practices of the different artists I highlight in what follows. Some of the responses to this situation have been well noted; pop embraced popular, mass-produced iconography; assemblages and happenings mobilized the found bric-a-brac of everyday life; minimalism prioritized the artwork's exteriority and the actual space it shared with viewers. As I try to show, color-field painting also marked a "progressive" step toward the integration of art into public life, it too helped "modernize" art by adapting it to these new circumstances. Namely, it helped find a home for contemporary art in the academy, giving rise to an accredited and disciplined criticism and thus forging the way for the eventual professionalization of contemporary art.

Indeed, by focusing on how art relates to its audience, I am only being typical of my own time. It is in terms of audience and address that Fredric Jameson has described the currently reigning paradigm:

> Theories of communication...have come to dominate official thinking today...the ideology of communication has come to blanket the field and to discredit any philosophical representations that fail to acknowledge the primacy and uniqueness of language, the speech act, or the communicational exchange. ...Communicationality has emerged as the central fact of world society in the course of a historical process...namely, the transformation of capitalism into its third, late or postmodern stage.(8)

This is how I identify with my current moment, and identify what I do, and have been doing, as a critic. I now look back in search of resemblances and origins, for early versions of what I take as my present.

**NOTES**

1. Craig Owens, "Analysis Logical and Ideological," Art in America 73 no. 5 (May 1985): 29.

2. Thomas Crow, "Critical Reflections," Artforum 30, no. 9 (May 1992): 105.

3. Hal Foster, "Postmodernism: A Preface," in Foster, ed., The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture (Port Townsend, Wash.: Bay Press, 1983), x.

4. Brian Wallis, "What's Wrong with This Picture? An Introduction," in Wallis, ed., Art after Modernism: Rethinking Representation (New York: The New Museum of Contemporary Art, 1984), xii-xiii. Wallis includes in the volume essays by Mary Kelly, Douglas Crimp and Hal Foster that are specifically constructed as rejoinders to Greenberg or Michael Fried or both.

5. Donna De Salvo and Paul Schimmel, "Introduction," in Russell Ferguson, ed., Hand-Painted Pop: American Art in Transition, 1955-62 (Los Angeles: Museum of Contemporary Art, 1992), 16.

6. Barbara Haskell, Blam! The Explosion of Pop, Minimalism, and Performance 1958-1964 (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1984), 12.

7. Dorothy Gees Seckler, "The Audience is His Medium!" Art in America 51, no. 2 (April 1963): 63.

8. Fredric Jameson, "The End of Temporality," Critical Inquiry 29, no. 4 (Summer 2003): 705-06.

## CHAPTER ONE:
## POETICS AND RHETORIC

There is as yet only one possible choice...either to posit a reality which is entirely permeable to history, and ideologize; or, conversely, to posit a reality which is ultimately impenetrable, irreducible, and, in this case, poeticize. The fact that we cannot manage to achieve more than an unstable grasp of reality doubtless gives the measure of our present alienation.... And yet, this is what we must seek: a reconciliation between reality and human beings, between description and explanation, between object and knowledge.

--Roland Barthes, 1957(1)

Outline

In 1958 the Washington D.C. painters Morris Louis and Kenneth Noland each embarked on what has come to be regarded as the mature phase of his career. It was the year when, as legend has it, Noland "discovered the center" of the canvas and settled on the image of concentric circles (fig. 1), and when Louis ended his brief stint as an expressionist to resume the Veil paintings he had abandoned four years earlier (fig. 2). Their work quickly assumed a leading role in the development of a self-consciously "modernist" approach to painting, winning praise and considerable artworld backing from such prominent critics as Clement Greenberg and William Rubin. But their work, especially Noland's, also became a main source of inspiration for the minimalist Donald Judd, whose own aesthetic came under attack from advocates of modernist art by the mid '60s. Another of Judd's favorite artists during the '60s, Lee Bontecou, also discovered the center of the canvas in 1958, and like Noland she marked it with a circle, only she used scissors rather than paint, leaving a literal black hole in the middle of her wall-bound constructions (fig. 3). Eventually she would exhibit these works at Leo Castelli's in 1960, her debut at the gallery following immediately on the heels of the first solo show there by another young artist, Frank Stella, who likewise had just begun carving and puncturing his paintings (fig. 4).

Like Judd, Stella would emerge as a pivotal figure in the arguments pitting modernism against minimalism, and he too was profoundly influenced in 1958, but rather than Noland, Louis or Bontecou it was Jasper Johns's debut solo show that had the decisive impact. Indeed, Johns's sudden rise to prominence in '58 was an event at once responded to and amplified by the decision at Art News to feature his work on the front cover of the magazine's September issue--the work in question being Target with Four Faces, a painting that includes, among other things, an image of concentric circles radiating from its center (fig. 5).

All of these artists, even Judd during this period (fig. 6), made paintings, albeit paintings at the edge of painting, paintings that radically problematized their own identity, that engaged only some of the category's constitutive terms--brush or canvas or rectilinearity or flat surface--and dispensed with the rest. Moreover, all these artists were deeply concerned with how their paintings looked, how they looked to the viewer or even at the viewer and in some cases away from the viewer, and how the viewer looked back at the paintings in turn. This stress on looking came at a time when claims were being made that looking itself, at least the kind of looking typically associated with art--standing at a remove, contemplating, interpreting--had become deeply problematic, even antithetical to the values of advanced art. Many argued that it was up to painting itself to redeem or even supercede the normative terms for viewing art, namely through the adoption of such strategies as "noncomposition" (which enforced what Michael Fried called "a point of no view") or sheer enormity (resulting in canvases that, as E. C. Goossen remarked in 1958, "consume the entire wallspace and in turn affect the quality of life in the room, pressing an emotional experience upon those who used to have to stand and peer").(2) By the latter half of the '60s there arose more extreme remedies to the artwork's visual aspect--such as anti-form, performance, process, dematerialization--compared to which painting as a whole was said to be hopelessly passé and conservative. Robert Morris, for example, hailed process art for being, unlike painting, "based on other terms than those of arbitrary, formalistic, tasteful arrangements of static forms."(3) Artworld energy and interest were now commandeered by these "other terms."

Sketched here are some of the main outlines of the argument I wish to pursue in this dissertation. Focus will be trained on the discourse on art in the 1950s and a handful of artists who emerged into that discourse around 1958 with some of the more challenging and consequential paintings of that moment, paintings whose proximity, interaction and overlap

with one another were soon obscured by the differences that quickly grew up in the minds of some of their makers, defenders and opponents. Tracing lines of influence or awarding "befores" and "afters" is not my concern; rather my task will be to contrive an analytical framework, articulate a structure, a scheme of categories and their relations, that can best get at the complex interplay that existed between these practices, as well as between the discourses that surrounded and supported them. To do so I will need to posit some shared stakes, common ambitions and threats around which these works and discourses seem to both agree and disagree. Foremost among what I want to establish: that the sense of crisis embroiling art's reception in the late '50s and early '60s warrants the deepest consideration when discussing pivotal innovations in painting practice and its criticism at the time.

It was in the '50s that the definitively "modern" question of art's audience gained new qualifications and a new tone, due in large part to the growing awareness of what Dwight Macdonald termed "midcult," a mass-marketed, "middle-brow" culture that both spurred and exploited an interest in high art among members of an expanding middle class. The fear was often expressed that, although advanced art was no longer being ignored, the new audience it enjoyed was appropriating it according to terms set by such marketing efforts rather than by the art itself. "The middle class in this country...is now surging toward culture," Clement Greenberg famously announced as early as 1946, although in a tone that fully registered his leeriness over the mixed-blessings such a surge represented. "The importance of modern art," Greenberg clarified three years later, "has become such that it is no longer sufficient to oppose it by ignoring its presence; its enemies have to fight it actively, and in doing so they have made painting and sculpture a crucial issue of cultural life."(4) By 1954 the painter Adolph Gottlieb came to the realization that "what has been a personal problem for me from the beginning, and what is a personal problem for

every artist I know, has become a sociological problem which seems to concern many people who are interested in art."(5) A few years earlier Robert Motherwell and Ad Reinhardt introduced the ambitious document Modern Artists in America with the same observation: "Very recently great attention has been paid to Abstract Art in exhibitions and publications. Yet, on the whole, this solicitude has been characterized by an erratic concern, full of prejudice and confused by misunderstanding."(6) Society, it seems, had only replaced neglect with misunderstanding, trading one kind of abuse for another: "society," Gottlieb's statement from '54 continues, "when it does 'use' art, usually does so on levels that to the artist are contemptible," so that "one can still say that in America and Europe today the artist is to a large extent exposed to an ignorant, irresponsible and anonymous public whose innate or potential sensibility has been corrupted to the point where it is incapable of responding except to what is crass."(7) Harold Rosenberg wrote in 1952 that "despite the fact that more people see and hear about works of art than ever before, the vanguard artist has an audience of nobody."(8)

Little had changed, or so it appeared. The artist was still believed to be living and working in isolation. Yet the shift was deemed threatening enough to necessitate new strategies to safeguard art's integrity and its ability to dictate the terms of its own evaluation. Rosenberg, for instance, chose to so exalt the act of painting as to make irrelevant the image that resulted and that viewers consumed; he championed those artists who "decided to paint...just TO PAINT."(9) What, of course, his ellipsis paves over is precisely a noun, some object to take the verb's action, thus rendering the usually transitive "to paint" suddenly intransitive. Such a desire to ward off any predication of the painter's act appears as only an extreme instance within a general tendency during this period to protect painting against what Jacques Derrida calls "nominalization," its appropriation as a semantic unity and metaphoric vehicle.

"What is proper to nouns," Derrida writes, "is to signify something, an independent being identical to itself."(10)

It was perhaps a similar impulse that, 15 years later, motivated the proponents of process and conceptual art and other strategies that sought to demote pictorial values and static imagery. Bracketed between these two iconoclastic moments are the paintings I'll be discussing--paintings that, by avoiding (or, in Johns's case, ironizing) traces of brushwork and other evidence of the artist's labor, could be said to privilege reception over production despite the growing anxiety surrounding the former. It will be my argument that such artists as Louis and Noland, Judd and Johns exemplify different responses to this paradoxical situation, that the manner in which they stress the visual aspect of their works is shaped to a considerable degree by trepidations felt about the viewer.

This is my outline. The time-frame for what follows stretches from the late 1950s through the early 1960s, while New York's art scene provides the setting (with Washington D.C. and Vermont cast in supporting roles, at once satellites and safe havens). Within these general parameters focus is further narrowed around two sets of phenomena. One is the variety of artistic approaches whose emergence in the later half of the '50s brought to a close the dominance of Abstract Expressionism. The other is the perceived expansion and transformation of the audience for art in New York at the time, a popularizing trend greeted with much hand-wringing by artists, critics and other art "insiders."

A further reduction occurs in how I characterize the emergent variety in art production during this period. Painting serves as my area of concentration, and within the spread out field of mid-century painting practices I isolate only a few examples--the works of Louis and Noland and, to a lesser extent, Johns, Judd and Stella. What the work of these artists and the critical discourse surrounding it are made to exemplify are the different directions charted by experimentation in painting and the relations between these

directions, the fluid exchange that occurred between various approaches, as different artists and commentators elaborated divergent responses to shared interests and concerns. My account concludes in the mid '60s, when this fluid interchange comes to a halt. By 1965 arguments emerged (such as Fried's Three American Painters and Judd's "Specific Objects") that responded to differences between artistic viewpoints as representing stark polarities. To an extent such divisions have survived to the present in the form of stylistic distinctions known as color-field, minimalism and pop. It will be the burden of my dissertation to soften somewhat these oppositions, and to recover a sense of common ground on which initially these various practices intersected in their attempts to figure anxieties over and defenses against what was imagined to be the conditions of reception awaiting them.

## Poetics and Rhetoric

The following chapters combine elaboration of analytical models with close readings of historical documents and formal analysis of artworks to get at the different ways in which artists could be said, and were said, to materially predispose their work toward or against an imagined audience. These different modes of address I will examine using the categories provided by rhetorical analysis. In particular, two main currents within the discourse on rhetoric seem especially well suited to my purposes, paralleling as they do the two main phenomena I've chosen to isolate. First, to track and describe the mobile field of confluence and deviation between the artistic and discursive practices highlighted in my account, I will appeal to the schema of the four master tropes--metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche and irony--as proposed by such theorists of rhetoric as Kenneth Burke and Hayden White, in the hope of exploiting the subtlety calibrated shifts in emphasis that makes distinguishing

rhetorical tropes possible (if also tenuous). Second, my reading of the many warnings and denunciations of improper forms of art's reception and appreciation that snowballed during the '50s and early '60s is informed by the constant yet unstable attempts to distinguish between the rhetorical and the poetic that pervades writings on rhetoric, in which the two by turn overlap, complement and oppose one another.

"Eloquence is heard and poetry is overheard." So goes John Stuart Mill's famous definition of the relation between rhetoric and poetics.(11) The line has been paraphrased since by the likes of T. S. Eliot and Northrop Frye, the later writing in 1957 (the same year as the Barthes quote that serves as this chapter's epigraph) that "criticism can talk, and all the arts are dumb.... Poetry is a disinterested use of words: it does not address a reader directly."(12) Defending poetry against the advances of rhetoric was the task assumed by Allen Tate, John Crowe Ransom, R. P. Blackmur and other apostles of '40s New Criticism. Or such at least was the explicit claim made by a young Marshall McLuhan in one of his earliest essays for the Sewanee Review, titled "Poetic vs. Rhetorical Exegesis: The Case for Leavis Against Richards and Empson," in which he writes that "a poet's intention is entirely absorbed in the nature of the thing he's making [whereas] rhetoric...is incomplete without the precise audience for which it was intended."(13) It is a distinction that anticipates the one made by Michael Fried over 20 years later in "Art and Objecthood," in which the presentness of modernist painting is defended against the presence of minimalist (or what Fried called "literalist") objects. "Literalist work depends on the beholder," Fried writes, "is incomplete without him."(14)

Much the same opposition can be found throughout '50s and '60s writing on art. "The most satisfactory creations," stated Clement Greenberg in 1955, "are those which, like Piero's and Cézanne's, remain ineloquent, mute, with no urgent communication to make, and no thought of rousing us with look and gesture."(15) More often than not the

opposition was evoked in terms of art's growing involvement with commerce and publicity, as an inward-turned realm of artistic integrity was construed as strictly separate from a rhetorical realm in the well-established pejorative sense, a realm of non-fundamental ornament, where art is perverted through outward-turned promotion and acclaim. Indeed, when Greenberg was asked, again in '55, to write the forward to a (promotional?) brochure celebrating the tenth anniversary of the Betty Parsons Gallery, the highest compliment he could muster was to praise Parsons for her siding with disinterested art over sales. "I've seldom been able to bring her gallery into focus as part of the commercial apparatus of art," wrote Greenberg; "rather I think of it as belonging more to the studio and production side of art.... Mrs. Parsons' is an artist's--and critic's--gallery; a place where art goes on and is not just shown and sold."(16) Ten years later, Thomas Hess wrote an editorial for Art News that drew exactly the same distinction, only much more starkly. "There are two art worlds: one where painters and sculptors are at work, the other where art is seen. The first is the fundamental reality: the second...is stuffed with illusions, ephemera like headlines, haute-couture, pull, History, gossip, cash and other fashions and conveniences."(17) Rather than overheard and heard, here the opposition between the poetic and rhetorical is characterized in terms of production and reception, making (in private and in intimate proximity with the work) and seeing (in public and through mediations that distance and disfigure the work).

Helen Frankenthaler adopted a typical stance when she put the matter more simply that same year: "When you're really painting, involved in a painting, what goes on in the art world doesn't matter."(18) Even curators and dealers routinely repeated the same hierarchical ordering of private over public. "There is no easy public art," insisted Henry Geldzahler, also in 1965, "there is only private, difficult art accessible to the public willing to make the effort."(19) A year before, the dealer John Myers lamented "the vast

enlargement of the art audience" and the commercialization of the art world since the early '50s (when he opened his own gallery, Tibor de Nagy). Myers's essay, titled "Junkdump Fair Surveyed," appeared in Art and Literature accompanied by "six pages of private art" (a pictorial spread reproducing works by older artists of Myers's generation such as de Kooning, Ellsworth Kelly and Joseph Cornell) as well as "six pages of public art" (featuring newer works by young pop artists like Tom Wesselmann). "One hopes," Myers writes, "there will be a deep cleavage between what [the older sculptor] David Hare calls public art and private art."(20)

Many of these statements from the early '60s straddle a transitional moment. Hess, Frankenthaler and Myers all look back nostalgically to a passing era when the poetic work was thought to depend upon the artist's sequestered, undistracted presence before it. But naming "the art world" as the culprit guilty of dividing the artist's attention and corrupting such poetics is new. Ten years earlier much the same language was used by artists to denounce a much more general notion of audience--it was an "anonymous" public, to use Gottlieb's word, or simply society at large. "The modern artist does not paint in relation to public needs or social needs," was the phrasing Gottlieb chose in 1955, "he paints only in relation to his own needs."(21) As was habitually recalled in the '60s, the number of artists, galleries and onlookers seemed infinitely smaller only a few years earlier, too small to warrant such a ponderous label as "art world." Or perhaps "art world" wasn't nearly ponderous enough; even if one did exist by mid-century, the ideology of Abstract Expressionism needed something grander lying in wait beyond the studio door. Namely, it needed society with its more telling and consequential acceptance or misunderstanding. That is where, according to Mark Rothko in 1947, "a picture lives by companionship, expanding and quickening in the eyes of the sensitive observer," and also where "it dies by the same token...permanently impaired by the eyes of the vulgar and the cruelty of the impotent." The vulgar and impotent were

not just artworld operators and gatekeepers, the critics and curators and 57th Street gallerists; Rothko meant them as representative social camps or hordes, armies at once dominant and dominated, empowered with a single paradoxical agency--to propagate senseless passivity, or as Rothko shrieked, to "extend their affliction universally!"(22)

Of course, the artist's isolation from society was not something post-war America invented. But after World War II a pronounced shift occurred in the way isolation was considered. Ignorance remained, only now it seemed to issue from the opposite direction: artists were the ones who disregarded society, not the other way around. "The very extremity of their isolation forces upon them a kind of optimism," argued Harold Rosenberg, "an impulse to believe in their ability to dissociate some personal essence of their experience and rescue it as the beginning of a new world."(23) Once thought an impediment to the aims of art, society's negligence and even hostility were increasingly seen as something to take advantage of. This becomes a familiar refrain during the early '50s, repeated by such artists as Gottlieb ("certain individuals need art but society or people in the mass get along quite well without art"), David Smith ("Nobody understands art but the artist...The artist deserves to be belligerent to the majority"), Hedda Sterne ("I don't think anybody really has a right to know exactly how I feel about my paintings") and David Hare ("I see no need for a community. An artist is always lonely").(24) Even Rothko came to feel that society's "very hostility can act as a lever for true liberation"; it left him feeling "freed from a false sense of security and community."(25)

There is a homology, of course, between the artist who creates for the sake of creation alone and the purposeless and disinterested poetic object that results. But artists in the '50s were not simply adopting the traditional and normative aesthetic attitude of contemplative disinterest; there was an active belligerence in their efforts to create

what Rosenberg called "a private myth" addressed to "no-audience." "If you are involved in the world," Barnett Newman declared in 1951, "you cannot be an artist. We are in the process of making the world, to a certain extent, in our own image."(26) If the "enemies" of modern art felt they had "to fight it actively," as Greenberg had put it, artists in turn grew more adamant in their dismissals of such public response. They even devised ways of throwing the public deliberately off track, hoping to forestall or frustrate a shallow or corrupting acceptance. Ibram Laslow admitted that, when coining titles for his work, "I have used combinations of words or syllables without any meaning.... Such titles are just names, and are not to imply that the constructions express, symbolize, or represent anything."(27) Much the same strategy was taken up by Gottlieb as well, only he applied it not to his titles but to the paintings themselves (fig. 7): "I wanted to use ambiguous symbols for my own purposes, to prevent people giving them interpretations I didn't mean."(28) In 1952 Rothko denied the Whitney Museum permission to buy and exhibit certain of his works, worried that the "real and specific meaning of the pictures would be lost and distorted." Two years later he refused to provide a statement to accompany an exhibition for fear that "an instrument will be created which will tell the public how the pictures should be looked at and what to look for."(29)

All such evasions and denials of the public became part of the story told by MoMA's 1959 canonizing exhibition "New American Painting," the catalog for which finds Alfred Barr noting how "the painters insist that they are deeply involved with subject matter or content yet as a matter of principle do nothing in their work to make communication easy."(30) Yet the very same accusation could be leveled at Barr himself. In 1941, reacting against the increased incorporation of overt propaganda into museum displays in Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia, he issued a policy memo to MoMA staff prohibiting text from accompanying the exhibition of paintings and photographs.(31) For Greenberg, even the titles of artworks

often contained too much text: "I wish someone would caution modern painters about their titles," he groaned in 1948. A few years earlier Rothko had given up on literary titles and started using numbers instead. Pollock followed suit soon after. Numbers didn't reveal or evoke anything, and neither did they conspicuously obscure and mislead. "Numbers are neutral," Lee Krasner explained in 1950. "They make people look at a painting for what it is--pure painting."(32)

As the Abstract Expressionists emphasized the individual's antagonism toward society, and with it the opposition between private and public, interior and exterior, releasing the artwork from the sanctuary of the studio and the hand of the artist developed into a tragic drama unto itself. Rothko wasn't the only one who felt this way about his work--that it was "a risky and unfeeling act to send it out into the world."(33) One of the ways this concern gets expressed is through tireless deliberation over the question of how and when to deem a work finished ("finished" being, paradoxically, the work's first predication, the moment it emerges as a fully formed subject available to adjectives, predicates, nominalization, to being seen as something--as finished, for starters). This very question consumed much of the first Artists' Session at Studio 35 in 1950. The legendary difficulties de Kooning had in deciding a painting was done was taken as exemplary. Robert Motherwell posited such difficulty--in words that anticipate Robert Morris's later impatience with the rhetoric of "tasteful arrangements of static forms"--as a defining American trait, in contrast to which French paintings "have a real 'finish' in that the picture is a real object, a beautifully made object. We are involved in process and what is a 'finished' object is not so certain."(34) Greenberg had ventured the same comparison on numerous occasions in the mid-'40s: French artists tended to render "finished performances but very little goes deep"; the problem with Chagall was that he "set himself to assimilating French cuisine and suavity...he polished, softened, refined his art"; the same went for Bonnard, who "can paint 'French'

easily enough and turn out any number of sure-fire successes."(35) An artwork's finish, accomplished as a deliberate feat, was rhetorical, a tacked-on cosmetic intended to persuade onlookers; finish stayed on the surface, where the work was forced to negotiate an audience, and was too much a matter of effect, too easily detachable from the poetics of interiority and depth. On the contrary, claimed Greenberg, real finish is never an external adjunct or frill but grows organically from the core of the poetic object itself, is its revealed essence. With great art, he wrote, "time alone has done the smoothing and refining." Time weathers away exteriority, bringing interiority to the surface.(36)

Greenberg deemed Jean Dubuffet the only "truly original" Frenchman of the new generation, and in 1947 measured his work against that of Pollock, only to find the American's paintings "rougher and more brutal," but also less distracted and self-divided, "completer...capable of more variety...more original," whereas "Dubuffet's sophistication enables him to 'package' his canvases more skillfully and pleasingly."(37) Pollock had a more concentrated, less diluted truth to reveal, precisely because he had no audience. "Isolation is, so to speak, the natural condition of high art in America," Greenberg announced around the same time, and like Rosenberg and Rothko he found that "it is precisely our more intimate and habitual acquaintance with isolation that gives us our advantage at this moment...isolation, alienation, naked and revealed unto itself, is the condition under which the true reality of our age is experienced."(38) Poetics radiated from the very milieu of artistic production in the U.S. "The best painting done in this country at the moment," Greenberg continued, "does not reach the public eye." French painting, on the other hand, had an art world. "The activity that goes on in Paris, the talk, the many literary and art magazines, the quick recognition, the tokens of reward, the crowded openings--all these, which were once signs of life, have now

become a means of suppressing reality, a contradiction of reality, an evasion."(39)

Even what little audience Pollock did have he refused to play to--his work exhibited "bad taste" and "a willingness to be ugly."(40) His paintings could only be overheard (this Pollock himself declared: "When I am in my painting, I'm not aware of what I'm doing").(41) Greenberg was no fan of what he called "the wild artist" ("if art is wild it must be irrelevant"); he cautioned against Pollock's lack of discipline, complained that his work "does not finish inside the canvas," but he also knew that a greater error lay in the opposite direction, in too much finish, in "Frenchified refinement."(42) "In Paris they finish and unify," Greenberg complained in 1953, and again called French art "'packaged,' wrapped up to seal it in as an easel painting."(43)

"Art is a matter of conception and intuition, not physical finish."(44) Greenberg's equating of an artwork's "finish" with the idea of packaging is telling. Whenever he used the latter word it was in reference to the rationalizations of late capitalism, its justifications of overproduction and the centrality of sloughing off mounting surpluses through ever-enhanced sales techniques. In a 1942 review of recently published art books he complained that the reproductions had "something glossy and packaged about them...their mode of production was rationalized as far as possible, and the result was arranged and corrected with a view to its sales appeal."(45) Five years later he broadened his complaint considerably: "Today the new mass cultural market created by industrialism is seducing writers and artists into rationalizing and packaging for mass distribution even the most pretentious products."(46) Greenberg perhaps meant the word figuratively, but there was more than a touch of literal truth to it as well; it was during this time that numerous corporations began commissioning modern art for their advertisements. Georgia O'Keefe painted for Dole Pineapple, Thomas Hart Benton for Lucky Strike, while the Container Corporation of America

retained the services of Leger, Henry Moore, Man Ray, Richard Lindner and, ironically enough, de Kooning, the master of not finishing.

De Kooning's contribution to the Container Corporation's marketing campaign appeared in a full-page ad in Fortune in 1945 (fig. 8), the same year the company exhibited its art holdings at the Art Institute of Chicago, in a show called "Modern Art in Advertising." The crucial role played by design and aesthetics in the making and marketing of goods was emerging as a dominant preoccupation for business during the '40s. "No product, however well its aesthetic functions are fulfilled," wrote J. Gordon Lippincott in his 1947 Design for Business, "may be termed a good example of industrial design unless it meets the acid test of high sales through public acceptance. Good industrial design means mass acceptance. No matter how beautiful a product may be, if it does not meet this test, the designer has failed of his purpose." Explaining his interest in modern art a few years later, Container Corporation's founder and chairman Walter Paepcke wrote, "The techniques of modern artists would identify us with current developments in applied graphic art which were--and are--so important to packaging."(47)

Greenberg was all too aware of the growing coziness between commerce and modern art. Only months after the de Kooning ad ran in Fortune, in the midst of a tirade against "the broad-front retreat of American art at the moment," Greenberg pointed to "the increasing practice on the part of commercial firms of having what in popular estimation are high-art artists illustrate their advertisements."(48) Packaging was part of the rhetoric by which high art was distracting, dividing and losing itself, being made overly concerned with pleasing middle-brow taste and its demand for things "not too hard to consume." This was a direct betrayal of what Greenberg understood as the modernist project in art, which since the late 19th century "asserted that the genesis and process of the work of art were what was to be most prominently offered to the spectator's attention...this

aesthetic repudiated finish, polish, surface grace." Or, as he announced in "Toward a Newer Laocoon," central to the avant-garde is "the assertion of the arts as independent vocations...absolutely autonomous, and entitled to respect for their own sakes, and not merely as vessels of communication." But often Greenberg would put the matter more bluntly: what he wanted were "pictures [that] make no gestures to fashion or publicity"; "painting [that] is all painting; none of it is publicity, mode, or literature."(49)

## Retreat of Poetics from Society to the Individual and the Rhetoric of the Lone Artist

Greenberg's denunciations of the rhetoric of packaging and finish can be seen as intimately tied up with his construal of a theory of the entire program and history of modern art and its attempt at securing a relatively stable base or sovereignty for its practices. Moreover, the stand-offishness of New York School painting might be considered in similarly broad historical terms, as a mere updating of earlier modern artistic tendencies, especially the notion of the quasi-mystical Image embraced by romantics and symbolists, which, as Frank Kermode has described, "for all its concretion, precision, and oneness, is desperately difficult to communicate."(50) For the poetic object to adequately "expand and quicken" it needs not only an artist but a viewer equal to it--one just as fully centered, self-contained and self-integrated. It "demands," Kermode writes, "an intense individuality, a cultivation of difference."(51) But again, artists of the '50s considered their difference motivated as much by society and its failings as by the inherent nature of their vision and their art. There was a bitterness, a vindictive quality to their stance, since indeed rapprochement between art and society had originally been their stated goal. Their isolation was only a measure of the

degree to which society shrank from its end of the bargain. As Nancy Jachec has recently argued, by 1950

> belief in communication through archetypal imagery had been completely discredited, and was no longer considered either possible or desirable. This is due to...the shift to a mass consumption economy, from which artists and intellectuals recoiled in a flurry of dissent.... The disappearance of the figure, preference for the signature style, and the increased individualism which this stylistic shift implies all point to the collapse of faith in the collective.(52)

Between the mid '40s and early '50s hope among New York School artists of a coming socialist utopia all but disappeared, and with it the idea of art's full realization, as well as the individual's, as occurring within society, coincidental with the recreation of society itself through its consummation in a fully realized humanity. Socialism was to bring about a universalization of the poetic, a communal, democratic utopia as the poetic object writ large. "Only through the establishment of a cooperative society can poetry reach its proper role as the fusing power of collective purpose," Harold Rosenberg had declared in 1936.(53) The poetic would serve as the basis not for a cult of difference but for cultivating commonalities and community. Ad Reinhardt spoke of "working toward a synthesis of the arts, to an eventual absorption of the imaginative artist in a more collective and anonymous job of creating better places for people to live in."(54) Mondrian's presence in New York helped keep this ideal of art and society's future reconciliation foregrounded. "With Marx, [Mondrian] anticipated the disappearance of works of art--pictures, sculpture--when the material décor of life and life itself had become beautiful," Greenberg wrote. "With Marx, he saw the true end of human striving as complete deliverance from the oppression of nature, both inside and outside the human

being. With Marx, he saw that man has to denaturalize himself and the things he deals with in order to realize his own true nature."(55) Indeed, few spoke of art's relation to the socialist ideal as eloquently as Greenberg. "The security, leisure, and comfort indispensable to the cultivation of taste," the critic claimed in 1946, "only a socialist society can provide." And two years earlier: "It will be enough for socialism that every human being--his body no less than his soul--is regarded as an end in himself...men cannot regard each other as ends in themselves unless they are freed from the necessity of exploiting and being exploited by one another."(56)

As socialist hopes faded ("who talks of socialism in America?" Greenberg was already asking by 1947), post-war appeals to the public increasingly conjured images not of utopia but of Fascism and herd mentality, of mass marketing and bureaucratic anonymity. "One of the aims of culture is to transform the private into the public," Greenberg explained. "Culture enables individuals to communicate and appreciate inwardness, and make it objective. Whereas failure of individuals to express inwardness converts them into a mass."(57) It was "totalitarian government," as Hannah Arendt famously put it in 1951, that "always transformed classes into masses."(58) By 1948 Harold Rosenberg was already labeling as hopeless all efforts to address a broad public--whether "by a movie producer, a party cultural official, or by the artist himself as a theoretician of social relevance." How to reach and effect audiences had become the specialized domain of "the mass-culture maker," the master rhetorician. As Rosenberg warned, "So deeply is he committed to the concept that men are alike that he may even fancy that there exists a kind of human dead center in which everyone is identical with everyone else, and that if he can hit that psychic bull's-eye he can make all of mankind twitch at once."(59) Persuasion, the traditional aim of rhetoric, when viewed in the context of recent history and advanced capitalism's awesome technical capacities, was thus

identified with the era's most pressing political and social threat.

Greenberg reasoned that, under such conditions, "the effort to assert a private life of emotion displaces the ambition to externalize and to synthesize a total view of the world."(60) He saw all hopes in social change and progress as having fallen victim to a growing and pervasive pessimism that restricted cultural energy and interest within the privacy--and privation--of individuals. Artists now lived in "an age whose remaining optimism...has become the private affair of individuals," he wrote. "Whereas the cubists regarded the disenchantment of the world as a triumph for man, later artists...have become so disillusioned with that triumph that they now seek new myths and new obscurities inside themselves."(61) Modern poetics, as a property of the fully integrated, self-possessed individual or artwork, had held out a promise of redemption if it could only fold society into itself; but this promise also entailed a risk, since turning to face society threatened to convert poetics into its opposite, rhetoric. Poetics had sought to lose itself as it absorbed its opposite and redeemed and poeticized society; now poetics feared such a loss of self, seeking defenses against being absorbed by rhetoric. If a poetic realm still existed, it would be sought no longer on the level of society but only within the individual. More than that, it would be sought by individuals in active opposition to society at large. The new poetic artwork, with its lack of figuration and its signature style, would thus become modeled on this new isolated and uncommunicating individual.

If artists in the '50s didn't worry over the corruptions of "the art world," then, it is not only because that world hadn't yet bulked up enough to make its presence felt. Society still remained a subject for art, if only through old promises left unfulfilled and new offenses and estrangements it had only just begun to formulate. But an art world of undeniable proportion did grow up around the New York School

during the '50s. At the same time, the stereotype of the staunchly individual artist was appropriated by society as a popular phenomenon, a poetic object with significant box-office appeal. In February 1957 the front page of the New York Times reported that in the decade since 1946 (that is, between the time Irving Stone's Lust for Life became a surprise bestseller and Vincente Minnelli's movie adaptation starring Kirk Douglas hit the big screen) there had been a 500 percent increase in the city's number of art galleries and in the volume of its art sales.(62) Within months of the report the Metropolitan Museum bought Jackson Pollock's Autumn Rhythm for $30,000 and the television show "The Scope of Picasso," produced by MoMA, aired on CBS. The following January drama critic Robert Brustein, citing the Met's purchase, complained in Horizon that "non-communication" had itself become a cultural fad, with Abstract Expressionism serving as "a pictorial parallel to the mumbling Method performance and the stammering San Francisco novel."(63) In April Time magazine reported that galleries were happily discovering that the absence of finish typical of American art was a "look" that attracted the most sales; dealer Rose Fried was quoted as saying that "the French can cook up a better cuisine, but right now we've got the more vigorous stew."(64) As the decade closed George Sugarman admitted at the Club that "the artist with no roots but his own subconscious, the cult of the primitive, of the immediate, of anything that will shock, of the need to be different...once so frightening, these values are now so domesticated that even the best homes will admit them; indeed, the best homes will admit none but them; they are tried and true; they are safe."(65)

As Gottlieb, Motherwell, Rosenberg and others remarked, society did indeed start paying attention to Abstract Expressionism throughout the 1950s. By 1958 concerns were rampant among artists and critics that New York School painting had become a look, a formula or style, that it had congealed into nothing more than a surface effect or finish.

Moreover, society trained its spotlight not only on the paintings but also on the figure of the lone, inarticulate artist who made and was mirrored in them. As a result, the poetics of the isolated individual itself became packaged, made over into image, caption, headline--that is, a rhetoric. The prime example, of course, is Jackson Pollock, who "burst forth as the shining new phenomenon of American art," as Life proclaimed in 1949.(66) Three months later, the opening of Pollock's third solo show at Betty Parsons's attracted a larger than usual crowd, well beyond the always reliable group of fellow artists (even though Parsons had mounted a Pollock show less than a year earlier). The collectors Roy Neuberger and Burton Tremaine were there, as were Alfred Barr of MoMA and Edgar Kaufmann, Jr., director of the museum's Department of Industrial Design, which was just then putting the finishing touches on the first of an upcoming series of "Good Design" shows, "the most extensive exhibition program in the applied arts The Museum of Modern Art has ever undertaken."(67) In addition to paintings, the Parsons show included a small model for "an ideal museum," the result of a collaboration between Pollock and the architect Peter Blake. Marcel Breuer, who was at the time designing a new house for Mr. and Mrs. Bertram Geller in Lawrence, Long Island, came to see the show at Blake's urging. Impressed, Breuer immediately arranged for the Gellers to commission a "mural" from Pollock for their new home.(68)

Also at the opening was Alexey Brodovitch, art director of Harper's Bazaar and head of the influential graphic design workshop in New York called "Design Laboratory." A fan of Pollock, Brodovitch convinced one of his more skeptical students, Hans Namuth, to give the show a second look. A few months later Namuth approached Pollock about permitting a photo shoot of the artist at work.(69) The now famous photographs that resulted were first published by Brodovitch in 1951, in the third issue of the short-lived Portfolio magazine. That summer MoMA screened Namuth's film. The following February Brodovitch again published more of

Namuth's work on Pollock, this time in Harper's Bazaar, accompanied by a short essay, "Jackson Pollock's New Style," by Clement Greenberg (fig. 9). Brodovitch, Barr, Kaufmann, Breuer and Blake all knew each other (Brodovitch designed books on modern architecture by Blake and Breuer, and his own chair designs won third prize in Kaufmann's first project for MoMA, the 1948 "International Competition for Low-Cost Furniture Design").(70) Together they stood at the Pollock opening, in the midst of this otherwise outcast milieu, as agents of social integration, an elite of stylists, trendsetters, tastemakers, master-builders and facilitators, a braintrust of the kind of misappropriation that Hess would list off in '65--"headlines, haute-couture, pull, History, cash, fashion." "There were a lot of people there I'd never seen before," recalled Milton Resnick, who attended the opening with de Kooning. "Look around," de Kooning replied. "These are the big shots. Jackson has finally broken the ice."(71)

Even if the verb "to paint" had lost its object, it still had a subject, a painter, a noun serving as actor or agent. Indeed, the more poetic--the more isolated, mute, oblivious and introspective--an artist like Pollock appeared, the more purely iconic and logo-like the figure he cut. "In a persistent effort to find a voice for America, to find a language, vocabulary, and intonation peculiarly our own, we have come temporarily to settle for no voice at all," Robert Brustein chastised. It was as if, like the method actor, Pollock had taken literally Northrup Frye's terse prescription about the poetic--if "the arts are dumb," Pollock would be too--and yet he found that it only transformed him all the more into a stereotype, a mascot, a celebrity. Fellow painters noticed it: "He was so involved with his uncontrollable neuroses and demons," Motherwell remarked, "that I occasionally see him like Marlon Brando in scenes from A Streetcar Named Desire."(72) No less than the dense webs of paint that he created, the photographs of Pollock flailing in the private studio seemed, in their very

curiosity and unintelligibility, to cry out for explanation, to necessitate a supporting language, a caption. Of course, the popular culture had plenty in store. Pollock became a mere reflection of a popular trend, despite the fact that he may have been that trend's very source: it has been suggested that the character of Stanley Kowalski was based in part on Pollock, whom Tennessee Williams met in 1944.(73)

"Since the painter has become an actor," Harold Rosenberg wrote, "the spectator has to think in a vocabulary of action: its inception, duration, direction--psychic state, concentration and relaxation of the will, passivity, alert waiting."(74) Even if unhinged from a direct object, the verb "to paint" could still be qualified by adverbs. Yet it was these very qualifiers that Namuth's photographs of Pollock so effectively objectified, made iconic, perhaps even more so than the painter's finished canvases. Indeed, Namuth's action-photographer approach, his use of motion, sequence, blur--all these were tropes that Brodovitch and other art directors had already made dominant within the aesthetics of '40s fashion photography. Alexander Liberman, Brodovitch's counterpart at Vogue and himself a part-time painter, began in 1951 to run his own photographs of the studios of such veteran European moderns as Utrillo, Kupka and Braque; by 1954 what Liberman called his "photo-essays" on European artists at work became a recurring feature in Vogue's pages. At the end of the decade MoMA hosted an exhibition of 150 prints from Liberman's project, with the show, titled "The Artist in His Studio," preceding by months Viking Press's publication of Liberman's coffee-table book by the same name.

This photo-documentary trend may have in fact been propelled by Art News, which in 1949 launched its own series of pictorials of artists at work, each issue capturing another poetic act in mid-performance. As Walter Benjamin famously put it a decade before, such uses of photography answered "the desire of contemporary masses to bring things 'closer' spatially and humanly...to get hold of an object at very close range by way of its likeness...to pry an object

from its shell, to destroy its aura."(75) By way of a metonymic slide, nonfigurative artworks focused solely on process and the materials of their own making were being supplanted precisely by figures--that is, the figures of their lonely makers and the behind-the-scenes anecdotes of their studios. The artist's inner turmoil, the studio as inner sanctum, the undivided devotion of the painter's act to the moment and the space of creation--all these interiors were being excavated, flushed out and circulated by publicity and mass reproduction. Moreover, all were being staged for an "anonymous" audience that seemed to be growing exponentially. "Society nowadays," Alan Kaprow would come to observe in 1964, "pursues the artist instead of exiling him.... Attracted to art by the mass mediums, they come to an artist with enthusiasm, and, of course, little grasp of what he's doing.... The artist can no longer succeed by failing. Deprived by his classic enemy society, he cannot comfort himself in his lack of recognition...now his only opponent, if he has any, is the competition."(76) Defensive tactics such as non-communication and the iconoclasm of pure action hadn't solved the problem--more people than ever were looking, and there was more and more for them to look at. Spectating and spectators couldn't be denied or avoided any longer, but had to be confronted directly.

This was an argument Greenberg repeated often, notably in the sarcastic 1962 essay "How Art Writing Earns Its Bad Name," in which he chided Rosenberg directly for not being able to "explain why the painted left-overs of 'action,' which were devoid of anything but autobiographical meaning in the eyes of their own makers, should be exhibited by them and looked at and even acquired by others."(77) By 1960 Greenberg's views had risen to dominance, superceding Rosenberg's: Greenberg was widely recognized as "the dean of postwar American critics," his claims for the most prosperous tendencies in recent abstract art credited with "extraordinary prescience and accuracy."(78) Foremost among those tendencies was the development of what Greenberg would

come to call post-painterly abstraction, exemplified in his mind by the work of Morris Louis and Kenneth Noland. But already by the mid-'50s others beside Greenberg were calling for a re-evaluation of action painting, at the very moment of its apotheosis, and for fresh approaches to be considered. Al Held, for one, reasoned in 1958 that "the rigid logic of a two-dimensional aesthetic binds us to the canvas surface making it an end in itself, not a means to an end." But from this observation he segued into an argument against the Action Painter and his cherished privacy. In his very next sentence, Held states that "I would like to develop from this not by going inwards toward the old horizon but outward toward the spectator. The space between canvas and spectator is real--emotionally, physically and logically.... I would like to use it as such and thus bridge the gulf that separates the painting from the viewer."(79) A year earlier Marcel Duchamp had similarly announced the need to acknowledge the spectator, since "the spectator brings the work in contact with the external world by deciphering and interpreting its inner qualifications and thus adds his contribution to the creative act."(80)

A generation of younger artists would soon follow through dramatically on these ideas. It was in 1958 that Jasper Johns first developed an intense fascination with Duchamp; and a year later, when Frank Stella showed his Black Stripe paintings at MoMA, it seemed as if Held's and Duchamp's programs had been fused into one. Neo-Dada is what many reviewers labeled both Johns's and Stella's debuts. "The paintings themselves need spectator reaction--shock, chagrin, amusement--in order to exist," Irving Sandler complained about Stella's approach. "They are public works... It would be difficult to imagine them glowing in the privacy of the studio."(81) The '60s would witness a growing demand precisely for a more public mode at the expense of the "privacy of the studio." "Art is a social profession, not an anti-social phenomenon," Brian O'Doherty declared in 1966. Two years earlier Kaprow had written, "A picture remaining in

the studio neither exists as Value nor exists at all for an art hungry public which no longer dreams of the romance of Bohemia.... The way from here is not so much Up as Out...out of that inner-man who has been bled to death or reduced to impotence from over-indulgence."(82) One way Kaprow himself went public was by authoring formal essays for publication, and he wasn't alone. A distinguishing feature of the '60s is how much writing by artists filled art magazines. Another example is Robert Morris, who famously advocated "the non-personal or public mode" of recent sculpture.(83) Perhaps the most extreme denunciation of the private studio came from Dan Flavin, who wrote in 1969 (a year after Art News ceased running pictorials of artists "privately" at work), "The romance of days of belabored feeling, of precious, pious, compulsively grimy studio-bound labor by haphazardly informed neurotic 'loners,' often verging on mental illness, relying desperately on intuitive good sense, is passing from art. The contemporary artist is becoming a public man, trusting his own intelligence, confirming his own informed ideas."(84) But by this late date Flavin was only stating what was plainly obvious.

Many members of the older generation--like Frankenthaler, Hess and Myers--agreed that art had assumed a more public mode, although they certainly weren't as giddy in their analyses. "Gone are the days when artists stood aloof from the mainstream of American life, votaries of sensibility defending precious and exalted principles against boorish complacencies and the bad taste of the majority," Hilton Kramer sighed in 1964.

> Nowadays artists...are marvelously adept at this venerable American pastime of substituting the word, the claim, the noise, for the difficult deed. It is now the dotty and outrageous, the loudest voices and most extravagant of showmen who become the most talked about, and therefore--by means of that curious cultural alchemy that turns publicity into respectability--the quickest

> to be accepted into the world where reputations are made and styles are accepted, praised and given instant historical significance. ...Sparkle, dazzle, dash--any sort of brightness and high jinks--are given high marks without a moment's (and certainly not a season's) reflection, whereas intelligence, decorum, and the values of the cultivated sensibility tend, if not actually to inspire contempt, certainly to be taken for granted.(85)

Myers also named publicity--moreover, publicity as aligned with cosmetics--as that which had superceded the poetics of privacy. "Stronger social contacts and extra dividends in publicity...these are regarded as the two most important problems facing Today's Artist....publicity is a basic necessity and nothing should be overlooked--certainly not radio and, above all, TV. The artist feels he needs TV appearances and the Telly has been going in for art more and more... at the Cedar Bar one hears how splendid Mrs. Jackson Pollock looked televised, or what a lousy make-up job they did on Henry Geldzahler."(86)

Television had indeed been "going in for art." For example: on "Bat Masterson," Bat's friend Teresa Renault bought a painting claimed to be a fake; on "Bourbon Street Beat," lead detective Rex Randolph was hired by an art dealer to find a stolen painting; a deliberately hidden painting was at the center of "Command Performance's" presentation of "The Intolerable Portrait"; while "The Margaret Bourke-White Story" was aired on "Sunday Showcase." And this was all in one night (Sunday, January 3, 1960).(87) News shows, documentaries and educational programming also focused on art: in 1962 Mike Wallace interviewed Robert Rauschenberg while in his studio making Barge, and Thomas Hess and John Canaday debated Abstract Expressionism on "The Nation's Future"; meanwhile, twice a week Aline Saarinen (nee Louchheim) did eight-minute spots every two weeks as the "Today Show's" art critic. Especially in the early '60s, art

was everywhere on TV, and TV was everywhere (by 1965 only eight percent of homes in the U.S. didn't own a television set; 20 percent of homes had two or more; the average family watched five hours of television a day). Artists watched it too, bringing TV sets into their studios. "I don't want my personality to come through the piece, that's why I keep TV on all time," Rauschenberg told Barbara Rose in the late '50s. Lee Bontecou remembers that the set she had in her studio during the late '50s and '60s was "one of the last oval ones."(88) Modernist painting, too, made it onto TV. The two part documentary "The New Abstraction," featuring Louis, Noland, Stella and Larry Poons, aired in the spring of 1966, with the voice-over narration written by art historian and curator Alan Solomon.(89) Television, labeled a "vast wasteland" in 1961 by Federal Communications Commission chairman Newton N. Minow, was not only hounding out of seclusion the brooding artist and the studio-as-sanctum by turning them into mass-circulated stereotypes, but it was enlisting those very stereotypes in its invasion of yet another, more expansive private realm--the domestic interior. Andy Warhol foresaw the loss not only of the private but of any personal feelings in the triumph of TV, with its outloud broadcast, over literary culture, with its silent, individual reading. "Books will go out, TV will stay," he announced in 1966. "When I got my first TV set I stopped caring so much about close relationships with other people."(90)

## From Poetic Individual to the Poetic Object

It is not that poetics disappeared entirely in the 1960s, only that it seemed to no longer reside in the usual places. Michael Fried, for one, devoted an entire 1963 essay to the relation between poetry and the work of Morris Louis. "Louis's paintings," Fried argued, "ask to be related with Symbolist poetic theory and practice."(91) In particular, the quality Louis's work shared with that of Mallarme and Hart

Crane was "the appearance, or illusion, of a sovereign impersonality." As Fried explained, Louis's "best paintings" succeed by "seeming to have come into existence as if of their own accord...as if the paint expressed itself upon the canvas through the painter, and not at all as if the painter expressed himself through the medium of paint."(92) Such an evaluation exactly inverts the terms Rosenberg had set out a decade earlier: no longer is poetic integrity sheltered within the individual artist at the expense of the finished work of art, but rather it is the work of art, in all its visual display, that attains poetic status precisely as it absorbs and eclipses the figure of the artist. Furthermore, as the phrase "sovereign impersonality" makes clear, it is no longer the action painter who must shun society for the sake of art, but rather the poetic artwork itself that must shun not only society but the artist as well in order to stand all the more impervious and indifferent. The artist as outcast seemed no longer credible, nor could the artist be trusted in public; instead the artwork, at the very moment of its unveiling, would defeat publicity by remaining only itself, alone, in public view. As Fried quotes Mallarme, "The pure work implies the elocutionary disappearance of the poet, who yields place to the words."(93)

In contrast to the '50s cult of the inarticulate artist opposed to society, the '60s would establish a poetics of the indifferent object, a shift that perhaps reached its climax with minimal art. But already in 1958 the change was well underway, and painting was pointed to as providing evidence--especially the tendency at the time for artists to make paintings the size of which expanded well beyond the limits of the easel format. As E. C. Goossen described the effects of what he called the Big Canvas, "The picture itself is now a thing, and as such refers less to extraneous 'subject matter' and illusions of the same. Almost as much as the Pyramids, it speaks of itself and itself alone. It is no longer a window to a world, but the world, immanent and autonomous." The autonomy of the work is bound up with its

sheer existence, which overrides its status either as a picture of some other object or as the product of some subject. Rather than mirror or window, painting is now a wall, and at the same time has walled itself off. The only predicate to be given such a painting is that it is itself. "It has size, and thus dignity, a dignity no longer intruded upon by fictitious agents in human attire. The figure was forced out of the picture...."(94)

Like Fried's symbolist painting, Goossen's Big Canvas divorces itself from, among other things, the painter--he is among the "figures" to be forced out. Yet, the painter who either is forced out or "disappears" within the canvas doesn't find in such exile the same privacy and sanctuary as was offered by the studio and its walls. For the painting--as surface, sign, image--has no hidden interior, but rather is all public. This was the point Geldzahler made in 1965, echoing Fried's words from two years earlier. "For the painter limiting himself to a self-imposed and invented vocabulary, simple shapes and their relationships, there is literally no place to hide.... All is out in the open for everyone to see. That doesn't make it easier to see, but, paradoxically, more difficult. There is no anecdote, no allusion except to other art, nothing outside art itself that might make the viewer more comfortable or give him something to talk about."(95)

Since art is inherently visual, so the logic ran, an artwork that is poetically, mutely just itself will necessarily be entirely open to eyesight. But precisely by coming to grips with visibility in this way, the artwork was thought to also stay resolutely within itself, to not pander to viewers, to avoid rhetoric. This was the tenuous distinction much art in the early '60s staked itself on. It is what differentiated '60s art from that of the '50s, what led to a typical kind of '60s visual effect that Lawrence Alloway called "not a struggle against signification but the description of its absence."(96) Roland Barthes observed the same thing in a 1964 essay in Art and Literature (quoted two

years later by Mel Bochner when writing on "systemic" art): "Lovingly--and exclusively--to paint surfaces that mean nothing at all amounts to a very up-to-date aesthetic of silence."(97) Art would somehow be visible strictly on its own terms, as if its visual aspect had "come into existence of its own accord," in total disregard of both artist and audience, and thus it would supposedly transcend the problem of audience without any trace of the tactics or struggles by which the artist actively opposes such an audience. Thus many of the pivotal statements on art in the '60s are at one and the same time scientistic disquisitions on the very essence of visuality and also attempts to reform or restrict or even bypass altogether the role of the artwork's reception.

For example, various types of viewer-object relations were made into a kind of negative criteria. Stella, for one, complained that "people...always end up asserting that there is something there besides the paint on the canvas.... What you see is what you see."(98) Fried solved the problem of the viewer by having him or her do like the painter and "disappear" into the artwork. Correct viewing obligated a particular self-annihilating stance and attitude: "As beholder, one occupies (or ought to occupy) a position... analogous to that occupied by [the artist] in relation to his work in progress--a position, that is, which may be called a point of no view." On the one hand, Fried didn't want to be made conscious of the painter's presence before the work--"individual paintings suffer," he wrote about Louis, "when one comes to feel that particular shapes or contours have been 'drawn' with the wrist rather than that they have somehow come about as if of their own accord"--and yet neither did he want to be aware of his own presence as an onlooker--thus a work also fails when it "distances us" or "we distance it," when "one becomes a spectator."(99) From Fried's "theatricality" to Susan Sontag's "against interpretation" to Judd's claim that "things that exist exist...the values and interests they have are only adventitious," a common aim was to isolate out what is at

base rhetorical, what is exterior or imposed or added-on and therefore not fundamental to artworks, to segregate what is a show of truth from what is just for show.(100)

On the other hand, it is also true that the issue of where to draw the line between inner and outer realms could itself never be settled, as the very prescriptions to limit reception prompted furious debate. Judd, for example, counseled the defeat of rhetoric by purging artworks of any trace of metaphor (by, to paraphrase Goossen, forcing the figure, or figuration, out). Fried, on the other hand, thought the way beyond rhetoric lay in an intensification of the poetic, according to which artworks would be so "subordinated to an aesthetic order and logic of metaphor" as to produce "an optical ambience of their own making."(101) The minimalist Judd, wanting no evidence or "figuring" of such an order or logic, which he considered to be an imposition from without, remained distant from his work (thus a factory could make it); Fried's modernist painter, wanting as much poetics as possible, kept such a close proximity to the work ("a point of no view") as to disappear into it. Both wanted to fend off rhetoric, Fried through poetic fullness, resulting in a work that figured itself, Judd through an absence of metaphor, resulting in a work devoid of any figurative dimension whatsoever. Each found the other's alternative to be no alternative at all, rather only another kind of rhetorical effect.

Puzzling out what was deficient or abusive in the act of viewing and interpretation itself required acts of interpretation, revealing in turn differing viewpoints. The essence of the poetic, its self-evident, self-same character by which it maintains its integrity above and beyond the advocacy and arguments of rhetoric, was itself shown to be a construction, one needing to be argued for. It would be one thing if, to repeat Frye's terms, an insistence on keeping art "dumb" simply led to the production of a lot of "talk." Then the artwork could still be thought to remain invariably itself, centered and resolute, no matter how turbulent the

ideological fray surrounding it. But for the work to be only itself, inviolate, its identity and integrity secure, it must stand separate, bounded, with space or an interval before, after and to the sides of it. Herein lies the problem, precisely in that unalterable gap upon which the coherence of all the arguments about poetics rest: the gap between the original and the uses to which its put, its appropriations and representations; the gap between the self-evident and the pretended, the real and the ideological, the actual and the advertised. The problem, of course, is that the dividing line itself should never have to be drawn; it should be a given, not construed; it should be discovered innocently outside and prior to the argument's unfolding. It should lie, that is, on the side of the poetic, generated by it organically like a skin or crust. But the gap instead always lies on the other side, is itself a representation, or rather the advent of representation. It is an "original" predication. Securing for the poetic object a sovereign border is at once its condition for being and an "imposition" indivorceable from the act of representing it; the emergence of that border, the activation of that gap or interval, even if supposedly "by the object itself," is what at the same time leaves the object unanchored, appropriated, victim to what Derrida calls "the possibility of its extraction and grafting."(102) By maintaining a bounded identity the work has already yielded to being severed from one (its "own"?) context, logic, ideology, and shuffled into others, wrested, compared, repeated, made "iterable." Just as with "every sign, linguistic or nonlinguistic...[the bounded work] can be cited, put between quotation marks." Derrida goes on: "I will not conclude from this...that there is no effect of the performative [as in action painting]...no effect of presence [as in the sovereign color-field canvas].... It is simply that these effects do not exclude what is generally opposed to them term by term"--call it rhetoric, representation, mediation--"but on the contrary presuppose it in

dissymmetrical fashion, as the general space of their possibility."(103)

As discussion over the poetics of '60s art circulated, so did its object seem to move and multiply; each argument conjured yet another model of art's essential nature and thus invaded and dispersed what it meant to consolidate and defend. The more the poetic was safeguarded from its instrumentalization by rhetoric, severed from society and even its individual maker and forced to retreat into the sanctuary of the unendorsed, indifferent object--all this made its social identity increasingly dependent on "outside" explanations and captions, and so the more arbitrary such explaining and captioning appeared. Being mute and indifferent left the artwork all the more vulnerable, unable to locate, orient or mean itself. Protecting the privacy of art was inseparable from its simultaneous disclosure, just as surely as outward publicizing marked a simultaneous inward violation. There were different ways of conceiving or figuring the native state of the artwork before its appropriation and disfiguration by rhetoric. There were different ways of figuring even supposedly nonfigurative art.

**NOTES**

1. Roland Barthes, Mythologies, trans. Annette Lavers (New York: Hill and Wang, 1972), 158-59.

2. Michael Fried, "Anthony Caro and Kenneth Noland: Some Notes on Not Composing," Lugano Review 1, nos. 3-4 (1965): 205; E. C. Goossen, "The Big Canvas," in Gregory Battcock, ed., The New Art (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1973), 62 (originally in Art International 2, no. 8 [November 1958]: 45-47).

3. Robert Morris, "Some Notes on the Phenomenology of Making: The Search for the Motivated," Artforum 8, no. 8 (April 1970): 65.

4. Clement Greenberg, "Review of the Water-Color, Drawing, and Sculpture Sections of the Whitney Annual" (1946) and "The New York Market for American Art" (1949), in The Collected Essays and Criticism. Vol. 2: Arrogant Purpose, 1945-1949, ed. John O'Brian (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 57, 320.

5. Adolf Gottlieb, "The Artist and the Public," Art in America 42, no. 4 (December 1954): 267-68.

6. Bernard Karpel, Robert Motherwell and Ad Reinhardt, eds., Modern Artists in America, First Series (New York: Wittenborn Schultz, 1951), 7.

7. Gottlieb, "The Artist and the Public": 268.

8. Harold Rosenberg, "The American Action Painters," in The Tradition of the New (New York: Horizon Press, 1959), 37-38.

9. ibid., 30.

10. Jacques Derrida, "White Mythology: Metaphor in the Text of Philosophy," in Margins of Philosophy, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982), 237.

11. Quoted in Timothy Gould, "Utterance and Theatricality: A Problem for Modern Aesthetics in Mill's Account of Poetry," in Ted Cohen, Paul Guyer and Hilary Putnam, eds., Pursuits of Reason: Essays in Honor of Stanley Cavell (Lubbock, Texas: Texas Tech University Press, 1993), 133.

12. Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1957), 4.

13. H. M. McLuhan, "Poetic vs. Rhetorical Exegesis: The Case for Leavis Against Richards and Empson," Sewanee Review 52 (1944): 267.

14. Michael Fried, "Art and Objecthood," Artforum 5, no. 10 (Summer 1967): 21.

15. Clement Greenberg, "Review of Piero della Francesca and The Arch of Constantine, both by Bernard Berenson" (1955), in The Collected Essays and Criticism. Vol. 3: Affirmations and Refusals, 1950-1956, ed. John O'Brian (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 249-50.

16. Clement Greenberg, "Foreward," Ten Years (New York: Betty Parsons Gallery, December 1955-January 1956), reprinted in Collected Essays Vol. 3, 256.

17. Thomas B. Hess, "Editorial: Artists and the Rat-Race," Art News 63, no. 9 (January 1965): 23.

18. Helen Frankenthaler, in Kristine Stiles and Peter Selz, eds., Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1996), 30.

19. Henry Geldzahler, "The Art Audience and the Critic," in The New Art (as in note 2), 53.

20. John Bernard Myers, "Junkdump Fair Surveyed," Art and Literature 3 (Autumn-Winter 1964): 122-41.

21. Quoted in Nancy Jachec, "American Modernism: Two Views," The Oxford Art Journal 16, no. 1 (1993): 146.

22. Mark Rothko, "Statement," reprinted in Charles Harrison and Paul Wood, eds., Art in Theory: 1900-1990 (Oxford, England, and Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers, 1992), 565.

23. Quoted in Serge Guilbaut, How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 159. To a certain extent my comments here repeat Guilbaut's observation that the Abstract Expressionists "found a way to get around the difficulties raised by the painted message by making the content of the message private and treating the private material as a public declaration" (ibid., 196). By 1964, Michael Fried would tell in a much more casual tone of how responsibility for the split between society and art had shifted from the former to the latter; artists, it turns out, were just taking care of unfinished business. "Modernist art in this century finished what society in the 19th began: the alienation of the artist from the general preoccupations of the culture in which he is embedded." Michael Fried, "Modernist Painting and Formal Criticism," The American Scholar 33 (October 1964): 646.

24. Gottlieb, "The Artist and the Public": 269; David Smith, "Aesthetics, the Artist and the Audience," in Harrison and

Wood, Art in Theory, 578; "Artists' Sessions at Studio 35," Modern Artists in America, 10, 14.

25. Mark Rothko, "The Romantics Were Prompted," reprinted in Herschel B. Chipp, ed., Theories of Modern Art (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1968), 548.

26. Modern Artists in America, 16.

27. ibid., 14.

28. Quoted in Ann Gibson, "Abstract Expressionism's Evasion of Language," Art Journal 47, no. 3 (Fall 1988): 210.

29. See Nancy Jachec, "Myth and the Audience: the Individual, the Collective and the Problem of Mass Communication by the Early 1950s," in David Thistlewood, ed., American Abstract Expressionism (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1993), 141-42. Perhaps the most notorious example of an artist restricting access to his work is Clyfford Still, who in 1948 wrote to his dealer Betty Parsons, "I no longer want them [his paintings] shown to the public at large, either singly or in group." See Guilbaut, How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art, 201.

30. Alfred H. Barr, "The New American Painting," reprinted in Stiles and Selz, eds., Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art (as in note 18), 42.

31. Martha Ward, "The Politics of Labels," The Smart Museum of Art 2001-2002 Bulletin (Chicago: The David and Alfred Smart Museum of Art, University of Chicago, 2003), 16.

32. Quoted in "Unframed Space," The New Yorker 25 (August 5, 1950): 16.

33. Rothko, "Statement," 565.

34. Modern Artists in America, 12 (italics added).

35. Clement Greenberg, "Review of Exhibitions of Mondrian, Kandinsky, and Pollock; of the Annual Exhibition of the American Abstract Artists; and of the Exhibition of European Artists in America" (1945), "Review of an Exhibition of Marc Chagall" (1946), and "Review of an Exhibition of Pierre Bonnard" (1947), in Collected Essays Vol. 2, 17, 83, 121.

36. Clement Greenberg, "Introduction to an Exhibition of Hans Hofmann" (1955), in Collected Essays Vol. 3, 245.

37. Clement Greenberg, "The Decline of Cubism" (1948) and "Review of Exhibitions of Jean Dubuffet and Jackson Pollock" (1947), in Collected Essays Vol. 2, 215, 125.

38. Clement Greenberg, "The Situation at the Moment" (1948), ibid., 193.

39. ibid., 193-94.

40. Clement Greenberg, "Review of Exhibitions of the American Abstract Artists, Jacques Lipchitz, and Jackson Pollock" (1946), ibid., 74.

41. Jackson Pollock, "My Painting," reprinted in Pepe Karmel, ed., Jackson Pollock: Interviews, Articles, and Reviews (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1999), 17.

42. Clement Greenberg, "The Present Prospects of American Painting and Sculpture" (1947), "Review of Exhibitions of Worden Day, Carl Holty, and Jackson Pollock" (1948) and "Review of Exhibitions of Marc Chagall, the American Abstract Artitsts, the League of Present Day Artists, and Ivan Mestrovic" (1947), in Collected Essays Vol. 2, 168, 201, 144.

43. Clement Greenberg, "Is the French Avant-Garde Overrated?" (1953), in Collected Essays Vol. 3, 155-56.

44. Clement Greenberg, "The Camera's Glass Eye: Review of an Exhibition of Edward Weston" (1946), in Collected Essays Vol. 2, 60.

45. Clement Greenberg, "The American Color: Review of Currier & Ives: Printmakers to the American People by Harry T. Peters" (1942), in The Collected Essays and Criticism. Vol. 1: Perceptions and Judgments, 1939-1944, ed. John O'Brian (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1986), 128.

46. Greenberg, "Present Prospects," 162.

47. Lippincott quoted in Nigel Whiteley, "Toward a Throw-Away Culture. Consumerism, 'Style Obsolescence' and Cultural Theory in the 1950s and 1960s," Oxford Art Journal 10, no. 2 (1987): 6; Paepcke quoted in James Sloan Allen, The Romance of Commerce and Culture: Capitalism, Modernism, and the Chicago-Aspen Crusade for Cultural Reform (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1983), 29. See also Russell Lynes, The Tastemakers (New York: Harper & Brother, 1954), especially 287-309. Lynes's book gathers together a series of articles he wrote for Harper's Magazine, beginning with his "Highbrow, Lowbrow, Middlebrow" published in the magazine's February 1949 issue. For more recent studies of this phenomenon, see chapter one of Allen, The Romance of Commerce and Culture; Erika Doss, "Catering to Consumerism: Associated American Artists and the Marketing of Modern Art, 1934-1958," Winterthur Portfolio 26, nos. 2/3 (Summer/Autumn 1991): 143-67; and David Joselit, "The Postwar Product: The ICA's Department of Design in Industry," in Dissent: The Issue of Modern Art in Boston (Boston: The Institute of Contemporary Art, 1985), 94-105. Although not large enough to

be classed a corporation, Country Homes of Tarrytown, New York, commissioned works by Jackson Pollock and Adolph Gottlieb that were incorporated into full-page ads run in Partisan Review in 1948. See Guilbaut, How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art, 184-85. Guilbaut also discusses (91-97) the phenomenon in the early '40s of department stores selling fine art, including the arrangement Samuel Kootz made in 1942 to show Gottlieb, Milton Avery, Arshille Gorky and John Graham among others at Macy's. See also Carol Duncan, "Museums and Department Stores: Close Encounters," in Jim Collins, ed., High-Pop: Making Culture into Popular Entertainment (Malden, Mass., and Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), 129-54.

48. Greenberg, "Review of the Water-Color, Drawing, and Sculpture Sections of the Whitney Annual," 57.

49. Clement Greenberg, "Review of an Exhibition of Marc Chagall" and "Review of an Exhibition of Hans Hofmann and a Reconsideration of Mondrian's Theories" (1945), ibid., 82, 18; Clement Greenberg, "Towards a Newer Laocoon" (1940) and "Review of an Exhibition of Morris Graves" (1942), in Collected Essays Vol. 1, 28, 126.

50. Frank Kermode, The Romantic Image (New York: Chilmark Press, 1961), 5.

51. ibid., 20.

52. Jachec, "American Modernism: Two Views": 146.

53. Harold Rosenberg, "Meaning and Communication," Poetry 47 (March 1936): 349.

54. Barbara Rose, ed., Art as Art: The Selected Writings of Ad Reinhardt (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991), 120.

55. Greenberg, "Review of an Exhibition of Hans Hofmann and a Reconsideration of Mondrian's Theories," 19. This particular linking of Mondrian and Marx was an artworld commonplace at the time. Notice the strikingly similar phrasing used by Reinhardt in an unpublished lecture of 1943: "Mondrian, like Marx, saw the disappearance of works of art when the environment itself became an aesthetic reality" (Art as Art, 43). Also see Harold Rosenberg, "Meaning in Mondrian," The New Yorker 47, no. 40 (November 20, 1971): "Like Marx, Mondrian anticipated the end of the tragedy of history and the attainment of 'the great purpose' of philosophy. A new type of man, selfless and indifferent to particulars, would see through the 'capricious forms' of nature to the motionless center of being, abstract and universal." Thanks to Annika Marie for bringing the Reinhardt and Rosenberg quotes to my attention.

56. Clement Greenberg, "Letter to the Editor of The Nation" (1946), in Collected Essays Vol. 2, 64; and "Mr. Eliot and Notions of Culture" (1944), in Collected Essays Vol. 1, 219. For an excellent analysis of the political underpinnings of both Greenberg's and Rosenberg's art criticism, see James D. Herbert, The Political Origins of Abstract-Expressionist Art Criticism: The Early Theoretical and Critical Writings of Clement Greenberg and Harold Rosenberg, Stanford Honors Essay in Humanities 28 (Stanford, Calf.: Stanford University, 1985).

57. Clement Greenberg, "War and the Intellectuals: Review of War Diary by Jean Malaquais" (1944), in Collected Essays Vol. 1, 193.

58. Quoted in Richard H. Pells, The Liberal Mind in a Conservative Age: American Intellectuals in the 1940s and 1950s (Hanover, New Hampshire: Wesleyan University Press, 1989), 86.

59. Quoted in Jachec, "Myth and the Audience," 141.

60. Clement Greenberg, "Review of an Exhibition of Victor Brauner" (1947), in Collected Essays Vol. 2, 150.

61. Clement Greenberg, "Review of Exhibitions of David Smith, David Hare, and Mirko" (1947), ibid., 141.

62. Clarence Dean, "Art Galleries Enjoy Boom Here, But Artists Are Not Prospering," The New York Times, February 25, 1957: 1.

63. Robert Brustein, "The Cult of Unthink," Horizon (New York) 1, no. 1 (September 1958): 44.

64. "Boom on Canvas," Time 71, no. 14 (April 7, 1958): 80.

65. "Is There a New Academy? Part II," Art News 58, no. 5 (September 1959): 60.

66. Dorothy Seiberling, "Jackson Pollock: Is He the Greatest Living Painter in the United States?" Life 27, no. 6 (August 8, 1949): 42; reprinted in Pepe Karmel, ed., Jackson Pollock: Interviews, Articles, and Reviews (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1999), 63-64.

67. On the opening of the 1949 Parsons's show, see Steven Naifeh and Gregory White Smith, Jackson Pollock: An American Saga (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, Inc., 1989), 597-98; on Edgar Kaufmann, Jr., see Terence Riley and Edward Eigen, "Between the Museum and the Marketplace: Selling Good Design," The Museum of Modern Art at Mid-Century at Home and Abroad (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1994), 150-79.

68. Peter Blake, No Place Like Utopia (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993), 118.

69. Hans Namuth, "Photographing Pollock," in Barbara Rose, ed., Pollock Painting (New York: Agrinde Publications, 1980), n.p.; Barbara Rose, "Hans Namuth's Photographs and the Jackson Pollock Myth: Part One: Media Impact and the Failure of Criticism," Arts Magazine 53, no. 7 (March 1979): 112-16. See also Pepe Karmel, "Pollock at Work: The Films and Photographs of Hans Namuth," Jackson Pollock (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1998), 87-92. Discussion of Portfolio and the Pollock feature in issue 3 (1951) can be found in Andy Grundberg, Alexey Brodovitch (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1989).

70. Kerry William Purcell, Alexey Brodovitch (London: Phaidon Press Ltd., 2002), 48; Riley and Eigen, "Between the Museum and the Marketplace," 152-53.

71. Naifeh and Smith, Jackson Pollock, 598.

72. Jeffrey Potter, To a Violent Grave: An Oral Biography of Jackson Pollock (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1985), 70.

73. Ellen G. Landau, Jackson Pollock (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1989), 15-17, 238-9.

74. Rosenberg, "The American Action Painters," 29.

75. Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," reprinted in Hannah Arendt, ed., Illuminations, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schoken Books, 1968), 223.

76. Allan Kaprow, "Should the artist become a man of the world?" Art News 63, no. 6 (October 1964): 35.

77. Clement Greenberg, "How Art Writing Earns Its Bad Name" (1962), in The Collected Essays and Criticism. Vol. 4: Modernism with a Vengeance, 1957-1969, ed. John O'Brian (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 136.

78. William Rubin, "Younger American Painters," Art International 4, no. 1 (January 1960): 26; Lawrence Alloway, "Easel Painting at the Guggenheim," Art International 5, no. 10 (December 1961): 30.

79. Quoted in Barbara Rose, "Second Generation: Academy and Breakthrough," Artforum 4, no. 1 (September 1965): 59.

80. Marcel Duchamp, "The Creative Act," in The New Art (as in note 2), 48.

81. Irving Hershel Sandler, "New York Letter," Art International 4, no. 9 (December 1, 1960): 25.

82. Brian O'Doherty, "The New Whitney Museum," Art and Artists 1, no. 7 (October 1966): 61; Kaprow, "Should the artist become a man of the world?": 37, 34.

83. Robert Morris, "Notes on Sculpture," in Gregory Battcock, ed., Minimal Art: A Critical Anthology (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1968), 231.

84. Dan Flavin, "...on an American artist's education...," Artforum 6, no. 7 (March 1968): 32. In the first chapter of her Machine in the Studio: Constructing the Postwar American Artist (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), Caroline A. Jones discusses the '60s transformation of the studio from a private to a public space in terms of a shift from an individualized, craft-based model to a more technologically intensive, factory-based one.

85. Hilton Kramer, "The Season Surveyed," Art in America 52, no. 3 (June 1964): 108.

86. Myers, "Junkdump Fair Surveyed": 131.

87. Naomi Sawelson-Gorse, "Sound Bites and Spin Doctors," The New Frontier: Art and Television 1960-65 (Austin, Texas: Austin Museum of Art, 2000), 71. Many of the facts and statistics about television in the early 1960s are drawn from this source, as well as from Lynn Spigel, Welcome to the Dreamhouse: Popular Media and Postwar Suburbs (Durham, North Carolina, and London: Duke University Press, 2001), especially 265-309. See also The Eighth Art: Twenty-Three Views of Television Today (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1962), especially the chapter by Brian O'Doherty, "Art on Television," 109-15; and Marya Mannes, "Art on TV," Art in America 53, no. 6 (December-January 1965-66): 56-61.

88. Rauschenberg quoted in John Alan Farmer, "Pop People," The New Frontier, 24; Bontecou quoted in Mona Hadler, "Lee Bontecou's Worldscapes," in Lee Bontecou: A Retrospective (Chicago and Los Angeles: The Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, and UCLA Hammer Museum, 2003), 204. Ugo Mulas's photographs of Bontecou watching TV in her New York studio and Rauschenberg's TV atop a cart with wheels in his studio are reprinted in Alan Solomon, New York: The New Art Scene (Canada: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1967), 110-11, 246-47.

89. "Morris Louis and Kenneth Noland: The New Abstraction," debuted on WNET TV Channel 13 on Tuesday, March 22, 1966 at eight o'clock in the evening, and was rebroadcast the next day at four in the afternoon. "The New Abstraction: Larry Poons and Frank Stella," also 30 minutes long and shot in black and white 16mm film, aired soon after. Both were part of the series "USA: Artists," which included installments on Barnett Newman, Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein, Claes Oldenburg, Jasper Johns, Jack Tworkov, Robert Rauschenberg,

Jim Dine and Willem de Kooning. The director of the films was Lane Slate, who would go on to pursue a Hollywood career, the hallmarks of which include writing the screenplay for They Only Kill Their Masters (1972) and serving as a producer on the television series The Rockford Files. For more on the "USA: Artists" series see Jones, Machine in the Studio, 82-97.

90. Warhol quoted in Farmer, "Pop People," 22-23, 29. Already in 1949, artist Ralph Pearson was writing in The Art Digest, "$300 for television and $5 for some paints and brushes.... We can grant at once the utility value of television in its reporting function--its adding of distant visual facts to the myriads of environmental facts which press upon us from every side.... All the programs are picked for us and fed to us by the Big Business, which owns television, on the basis of what it thinks millions should see. It is the BIG VOICE speaking.... The individual...is being standardized: his individual self is being smothered.... The self-expressive activity of a folk-art is at the opposite pole from the remote-controlled passivity of television.... Painting should cost $300 and television $5." Ralph Pearson, "Television vs. Amateur Art," The Art Digest 24, no. 2 (October 15, 1949): 3.

91. Michael Fried, "Some Notes on Morris Louis," Arts Magazine 36, no. 2 (November 1963): 25.

92. ibid.

93. ibid., 26.

94. Goossen, "The Big Canvas," 65.

95. Geldzahler, "The Artist and the Audience," 54.

96. Lawrence Alloway, "Artists as Writers, 2: The Realm of Language," first published in 1974, reprinted in Network: Art and the Complex Present (Ann Arbor, Mich.: UMI Research Press, 1984), 212.

97. Roland Barthes, "The World Become Thing," Art and Literature 3 (Autumn-Winter 1964): 148.

98. Bruce Glaser, "Questions to Stella and Judd," in Minimal Art (as in note 83), 157-58.

99. Fried, "Some Notes on Not Composing": 205-06 (emphasis added); Fried, "Some Notes on Morris Louis": 25; Fried, "Art and Objecthood": 21. In these articles on Louis (1963) and on "not composing" (1965) Fried first develops a theory of beholding art--involving an extinguishing of self-consciousness (i.e. "disappearance" and "a point of no view")--that will later be elaborated as "absorption" in his study of late 18th-century French painting, Absorption and

Theatricality: Painting and Beholder in the Age of Diderot (Berkeley, Calf.: University of California Press, 1980).

100. Donald Judd, "Nationwide Reports: Hartford. Black, White and Gray" (1964), in Complete Writings 1959-1975 (Halifax: The Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 1975), 117.

101. Fried, "Some Notes on Morris Louis," 26. More recently Fried has appealed to the notion of "Mallarmean metaphoric expansiveness" in relation to James Welling's photographs. See Fried, "James Welling's Lock, 1976," in Sarah J. Rogers, James Welling: Photographs 1974-1999 (Columbus, Ohio: Wexner Center for the Arts, 2000), 26.

102. Jacques Derrida, "Signature Event Context," in Margins of Philosophy (as in note 10), 317.

103. ibid., 320, 327.

## CHAPTER TWO:
## MODES OF ADDRESS

As soon as you recognize a thing as a face, it is an object no longer, but one pole in a situation of reciprocal consciousness.

--Leo Steinberg, 1960(1)

The beholder, always there, gazing, is the silent motor that drives the history of modern painting forward...

--Stephen Melville, 1981(2)

One well-known abstract painter said to me, "Oh, the public, we're always worrying about the public."

--Leo Steinberg, 1960(3)

## A Crisis of Metaphor

The struggle to distinguish poetics from rhetoric has a long history, one stretching perhaps all the way back to the very inception of the terms themselves.(4) During modernism, this struggle has often been staged as an effort to expunge rhetoric entirely from artworks, so much so as to render them "impenetrable, irreducible" (Barthes), "absolutely autonomous, entitled to respect for their own sakes, and not merely as vessels of communication" (Greenberg), so as to leave "nothing outside art itself that might make the viewer more comfortable or give him something to talk about" (Geldzahler). But a problem then arises: namely, how, in the course of avoiding the reduction of the poetic to the instrumentalities of communication, propaganda and ideology, and to the criteria of result and gain--how to not also thereby drain away all meaning, all the suggestive fullness that accounts for the poetic's unique power in the first place.

This is an argument running through much modern criticism. For example, in 1947 the literary critic Cleanth Brooks famously coined the axiom "The Heresy of Paraphrase" to vilify any assumption that a "poem constitutes a 'statement' of some sort," since "all such formulations lead away from the center of the poem," its poetic core.(5) Fifteen years later Stanley Cavell voiced his objection to Brooks, arguing that paraphrase, especially in its lengthy approximations and their obvious inadequacy, "registers what William Empson calls the 'pregnancy' of metaphors, the burgeoning of meaning in them."(6)

Like content and communication, metaphor proved a contentious term by mid-century. Often artists and critics would formulate a position on metaphor that hedged between retaining and banishing it in works of art. Speaking of the Abstract Expressionists of his generation, David Smith stated that "their communication objective would be something like this: if I am to paint in the most ethically good way

possible, this striving has a metaphorical consonance with other men attempting to act ethically in their form of life, and may have an actual effect on their lives, but I cannot sacrifice my individual struggle to the kind of generalization required for guaranteed direct moral effect on their lives."(7) Existing somewhere between the specific and the general, the work of art--as formal exercise, figure, model--counts for more than just its own literal, quantifiable, material instance, and yet at the same time its singularity safeguards it from being too easily or entirely generalized or paraphrased, made merely illustrative of already existing, accepted belief systems and patterns of meaning. Metaphor can describe the burgeoning of meaning that is the hallmark of the artwork's poetics, the way in which it exists as more than its literal self; but being made into a metaphor is also a means of rhetorically abusing an artwork, which is too much itself to be generalized, too individual to be made into something it is not.

This would be one way of describing the difficult burden put on art under modernism, the struggle to reconcile aesthetic experience's internal contradictions, its demand for both empirical particularity and symbolic unity. Since it was first conceived, modern aesthetic theory has complimented a middle-class model of subjectivity; it orients the poetic toward the body and its appetites, toward individual experience and immediate sensation, and yet the aesthetic realm has nevertheless held out the promise of stemming the social dispersion encouraged by the perpetual stoking of appetites under capitalism. Through its alchemy the aesthetic converts divisive greed into shared tastes, self-interested pursuits into disinterested pleasures, sensory distraction into felt connection. It was thought to save the individual from total mute privacy on the one hand and the false rhetorical communities of ideology and rationalized consumption on the other. As recently as 1983 this was how Hal Foster defined aesthetic experience, as "effect[ing] a world at once (inter)subjective, concrete and universal--a

symbolic totality" and "as a necessary negative category," its poetic integrity and singularity proving "a critical interstice in an otherwise instrumental world."(8) The view expressed here is not far from the one voiced 30 years earlier by R. P. Blackmur, like Brooks a self-proclaimed New Critic who, while decrying instrumentality and the fact "that we live in a rhetoric-sodden world," simultaneously looked to the analogy-making powers of metaphor for that world's very salvation. "It is indeed by analogy that I believe the mind makes its richest movements," Blackmur wrote in 1950, "and it is by analogy that I believe the mind makes its deepest use of what it has understood.... It is through analogy, if at all, that the falcon can again hear the falconer, that things can come together again, and that again the center can hold."(9) Similarly Hannah Arendt wrote in 1967, in a New Yorker appreciation of Walter Benjamin and his "poetical" mode of thought, that "metaphors are the means by which the oneness of the world is poetically brought about"--and this despite Arendt's keen awareness of modern society's tendencies toward decidedly nonpoetic, instrumental forms of oneness such as massification and totalitarianism.(10)

Much dramatic art criticism of the postwar period likewise bears witness to the difficulties of holding together such opposed impulses within modern poetics. Greenberg, during the years just before and after 1950, admitted intense ambivalence about Pollock and the sheer experiential onslaught, the "hallucinated uniformity" of his allover paintings, which the critic admitted may "answer something deep-seated in contemporary sensibility" but which he also hesitated to call an aesthetic achievement ("uniformity--the notion is antiaesthetic," he wrote in the 1948 essay "The Crisis of the Easel Picture").(11) In 1967 Fried saw the tension between the general and particular, between symbolic unity and experiential intensity, made manifest in modernist painting's relationship to minimalist objects, both of which form "a response to the same developments" but nevertheless find themselves "in direct

conflict," so much so they had to be split apart in--and as--"Art and Objecthood."(12)

For Greenberg and Fried, an artwork that wagers everything on material intensity (whether a Pollock or a Judd) threatens not only to privatize experience but to do so for too wide an audience, offering up cheap sensory thrills to be had by any shock-craving viewer. The poetic object, if too mute and intractable, may succeed at luring spectators but can't in turn provide them with any leads on how to figure their experience and make it over into social meanings, and thus make themselves over into a cultural community. On the other hand, an artwork more exacting in the kind of audience it summons and anticipates, that tightly specifies a cogent set of communal values, runs the risk of being overly narrow and exclusive--precisely the accusation leveled at Louis and Noland and the modernist hero-worship heaped on them during the '60s.

Cavell, like Blackmur a teacher of Fried's, felt that the modernist avoidance of rhetoric and its drive toward "the object itself" risked more than just neglect of metaphor and its fullness. Indeed, Cavell went so far as to reject in large part the standard distinction between poetry and rhetoric, insisting instead that the poetic work is, like rhetoric, intended for an audience. Cavell appealed not to Mill but Kant: "Kant's aesthetic is, I take it, supposed to be formal, but that does not deter Kant from introducing intention (anyway, 'purposiveness') and a certain kind of response ('disinterested pleasure') in determining the grounds on which anything is to count as art."(13) Intention for Cavell is itself one of the most basic qualities that an artwork figures--and, moreover, figures metaphorically. That is, it is not important to know the artist's <u>specific</u> intentions--in order to enjoy the work it is not "necessary...to get in touch with the artist to find out the answer." Rather, the quality of intention is generalized: "When I experience a work of art," Cavell writes, "I feel that I am <u>meant</u> to notice one thing and not another, that the

placement of a note or rhyme or line has a purpose."(14) Fried was in full agreement; he wrote the same year that, when it comes to understanding one's encounter with a work of art, "the relevant comparison is with human relationships."(15)

Leo Steinberg would also insist on the importance of the work's relation to its audience, and also argue against the reduction of that relation down to a question of the artist's specific intentions. Yet at the same time he saw it as more than a matter of comparison or analogy. In his view, artistic form contains within itself some predisposition toward audience. "All works of art or stylistic cycles are definable by their built-in idea of the spectator," Steinberg wrote during the course of a discussion of Noland's paintings from the mid-'60s. For Steinberg, it was no knock against the poetic integrity of Noland's work to find that, "like all art that ostensibly thinks only about itself, it creates its own viewer, projects its peculiar conception of who, what and where he is."(16) Stressed here is a point even the young McLuhan conceded back in the '40s, that the poetic couldn't entirely purge itself of an awareness of audience; rather, as distinct from rhetoric, the audience of the poetic work must exist not externally but as one of the work's internal elements. "The audience is in the poem."(17)

The argument advanced by Steinberg is not far from the one elaborated during the 1930s by Mikhail Bakhtin in his efforts to theorize what he called the "dialogical" space of artistic production. "Between the word and its object, between the word and its subject, there exists an elastic environment of other, alien words about the same object, the same theme." Any "utterance," as Bakhtin called the artwork, "is entangled, shot through with shared thoughts, points of view, alien value judgments and accents...[it] weaves in and out of complex interrelationships, merges with some, recoils from others, intersects with yet a third group." Bakhtin intended his view to run counter to the conventional idea of the poetic or "monological," of "the artistic work as a

whole...a self-sufficient and closed authorial monologue, one that presumes only passive listeners beyond its own boundaries," listeners who can only ever "overhear" the poetic utterance. As Bakhtin notes, "the work as a rejoinder in a given dialogue...the polemical style, the parodic, the ironic...[is] usually classified as rhetorical and not as poetic."(18) The kind of blurring of poetics and rhetoric enacted by Bakhtin's notion of the dialogical has been remarked on recently by T. J. Clark, who, in a discussion of Pollock, writes that "the so-called context of a work of art is therefore not mere surrounding, separable from form; ...context is text...all utterances anticipate answers, provoking them, eluding them, orienting themselves toward an imagined future in which something is said or done in reply; and works of art, being specially elaborate, pondered cases of utterance, are most of all shot through with such directedness."(19)

What particular features distinguish the "directedness" or "intendedness" of postwar American painting? What conception of the viewer does such art create or build into itself? "The future that works of art envisage," Clark's discussion of Pollock continues, "is very often, at least in the modern period, one of misuse and misunderstanding." Motherwell and Reinhardt had also chosen the word "misunderstanding"--along with "erratic," "confused" and "prejudiced"--to apply to the scene of reception they imagined awaited their work. The sentiment wasn't limited to romantic painters, though; even such a champion of public-minded and socially useful art as Walter Gropius could complain in 1961 that "communication from person to person is at an all time low today in spite of, or because of, our tremendous technical means of communication, and most individuals are driven into shallow superficiality in all their relations with other people, including their own friends."(20)

What lies in the offing is superficiality, prejudice, confusion--such was the assumption shared by many postwar

artists. As was shown in the last chapter, some artists tried to resist meaning altogether, to avoid any sort of figural reading of their work. As Clark argues, given the dialogical space of art production and the building into artworks of responses to an imagined scene of their reception, such works "may either try to contain and figure that future in an effort to control it, or attempt instead--as certain Pollock's do--to annihilate the very grounds of misreading and shrug off past and future alike, making the work turn on some impossible present, thickened to the point where it can dictate its own (unique) terms."(21)

One way of thickening the work's poetics and obliterating both past and future--both the subject and the object of, say, "to paint"--would be to have the artist and viewer alike disappear into the work of art. Or to have artist and viewer not be at all relevant to it, leaving the work to exist alone, as if it had come into existence of its own accord. Plenty of early reviewers of Pollock's work remarked on how it left them feeling ignored, walled off, at a loss, confronted by "an elaborate if meaningless tangle of cordage and smears," by "mere unorganized explosions of random energy."(22) Yet Robert Coates also determined that, while "the threads of communication between artist and spectator are so very tenuous...some [of the paintings] have a good deal of poetic suggestion about them."(23) Similarly, Parker Tyler wrote that "the spectator does not project himself, however theoretically, into these works; he recoils from them, but somehow does not leave their presence." This was because "Pollock 'wrote' non-representational imagery...an alphabet of unknown symbols," so that "any system of meaning successfully applied to them would at the same time not apply."(24) Even Pollock seems to have felt estranged from the work, unable see himself or project into the images he created. He couldn't predicate them; he reportedly asked Lee Krasner not whether his work was any good, or whether it conveyed anything, but whether it was painting at all.(25)

Years later Mel Bochner answered with a resounding no the same question Pollock posed to Krasner. Bochner found that Pollock's canvases were so materially specific that, not only did they forestall metaphorical projection, they resisted being generalized whatsoever, to the point of not even being analogous to other paintings. "The late large Pollocks are unlike any other things ever called paintings before, and legitimately could be said to end painting as a differentiated category of art." According to Bochner, Pollock "made painting itself the object"; in place of the intransitive, objectless verb "to paint," posited here is the object unhinged from a verb, self-made and unendorsed.(26) Yet, at the same time, Bochner found the work comparable to all art; "Everything is still measured against Pollock," he writes just a few lines earlier. Thus is rendered a deadpan '60s update of David Smith's argument that whatever metaphorical reach works of modern art claim depends on their very individuality and unlikeness. Except that, in Bochner's revision, the object of comparison is no longer the ethical integrity of the endeavoring individual, but rather the factual integrity of the materially alien thing.

No doubt Pollock's example loomed large for the art of the '50s and '60s, but to a great extent what he exemplified was the desire to "control" if not "annihilate" (borrowing Clark's words) the relationship between poetics and rhetoric. Pollock was best at both. Greenberg, Fried and Rubin made Pollock's achievement a measure of all modernist art that followed it; but so did Kaprow, Judd, Bochner, Morris and a host of others. How to define Pollock's achievement, to determine the basis on which his work could serve as a source of comparative value, to make it generally applicable, became an open question. "Pollock's line bounds and delimits nothing," Fried remarked; "the dripped paint in most of Pollock's paintings is just dripped paint," Judd added; work this poetic--this sovereign and raw--seemed indifferent to the evaluations attributed to it. Intentions, specific ones, were attributed--"he looked hard," Greenberg insisted, as if

forcing the painter to claim his work.(27) Yet everything both did and didn't apply, as Parker Tyler diagnosed. With so much disagreement over the nature of Pollock's achievement, the only certainty was the achievement itself. Whatever it was, Pollock's work was effective publicity; like any good scandal or stunt it grabbed attention. Moreover, this fact needn't have anything to do with poetics, let alone aesthetics. Even Greenberg admitted bitterly that "the people who admire [Pollock] most on the New York scene today don't take him as a painter. They take him as an example of an artist in the line of Duchamp, someone who knocked you flat with his arbitrariness." To succeed through arbitrariness is "to break with aesthetics, with good and bad," since scandal has no ties with poetic interiority, but rather is judged purely on exteriority, on effect and results: "people reach for the far-out as a context and a category when there's not enough inside them, not enough inspiration or impulse."(28) Pollock pushed poetics to the point of its seeming disjuncture and liberation from rhetoric. Yet, rather than making rhetoric go away, this only granted it equal liberty in turn.

All of this perhaps lends support to Clark's assertion that, given the myriad and incompatible readings that seek but can't attain a definitive purchase on Pollock's achievement, "his painting is a work against metaphor."(29) The issue raised here involves far more than mere coyness or a reluctance to take a stand. Rather, Pollock's attack on metaphor gets at the heart of something profound about modernism. At least for Clark, it relates to what he calls, in another context, the "lack of consistent, repeatable meanings" in modern society.(30) It is one thing to claim, along with Arendt and Blackmur, that metaphor holds out the promise of restoring "the oneness of the world," in which "things can come together again, and again the center can hold"; or to assert, along with Theo van Doesburg, that "the (truly exact) work of art is a metaphor of the universe obtained with artistic means."(31) But lacking any strong

over-arching belief system, what in the disenchanted modern era can metaphor work with to achieve such wholeness and universality?

"A society, as it becomes less and less able, in the course of its development, to justify the inevitability of its particular forms, breaks up the accepted notions upon which artists and writers must depend in large part for communication with their audiences," Greenberg established in his first published essay on art, and it was a point he returned to again and again.(32) "There is so little left in the world that one can take seriously and sincerely enough to write poetry about," he sighed a few years later.(33) Modern society had at its symbolic center not a network of abiding metaphors holding it together but an absence, a scorched void left in the wake of its liberation from such abiding metaphors. "The present age...lacks an operative notion, a viable concept of the human being," Greenberg asserted in 1945, "a lack that is one of the 'still centers' around which the crisis of our time revolves." The problem, again, was one of generalizing the specific, in this case drawing out continuities between the individual isolated in his or her vocation and the human species at large. "The great theoretical, social and psychological need of our age," Greenberg continued, "is a means of centralizing the various separate departments of human activity to which the wholeness of life and the collective interests of humanity are not being immolated."(34)

The problem was two-fold. On the one hand, there was too much specialization, competition and fragmentation, too much turn-over in scientific paradigms, democratic consensus and the marketplace of values; in a capitalist, technological, historically self-conscious world there was no literal or symbolic axiomatic figures (no gold standard even); the only certainty was flux itself. Theories of process, perhaps, but these only further eroded the stability of the figure or sign. "Incomprehensibility in the arts is inseparable from the fragmentation of the public through the expansion of

professionalism," Harold Rosenberg concluded in 1956.(35) "The more we learn about man," Greenberg argued, "the more contexts we discover him to exist or function in, the less able are we to make up our minds about him." And this applied not only to the human subject. "Objects are no longer docile," Greenberg wrote in 1940, "they are enmeshed in a web of contradictory and controversial contexts, which makes it difficult for us to find a common, neutral attitude towards even a piece of fruit."(36) On the other hand, such symbolic fracturing was itself partly a result of too much unification, a by-product of massification and centralization. No matter how symbolically contested and unstable, modern society still had to integrate, had to accommodate more and more people migrating to cities, receiving an education, "surging" toward culture. Indeed, avant-garde artists now faced their own integration. To borrow a line from the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, "The unification of the linguistic market means that there are no doubt more and more meanings for each sign."(37) As society and the economy expand their reach, the culture becomes increasingly embroiled in problems of integration, rationalization, competition and pacification. If, as Greenberg put it, "the question of what is a corporeal object can be answered in many different ways," and if "society does not circulate an adequate notion of the human personality," such a state of affairs makes for weak metaphors, for "limited intellectual and spiritual objectives...after Hegel, for instance, philosophers stopped constructing world systems." As for artists, such a situation compels many to "try to make up for it by over-expressing whatever half-baked, stereotyped conceptions they themselves happen to have." Little wonder then, Greenberg concluded, that "the result...is either fulsome or banal."(38)

Many of the Abstract Expressionists, of course, expressed contempt for the culture of the fulsome and banal which they saw thickening around them, and so posed their art in opposition to notions of communication and conventional

meaning, and thus to the figure. "Direct sensual experience is more real than living in the midst of symbols, slogans, worn-out plots, clichés," Ibram Lassaw declaimed.(39) Rothko advocated that "the familiar identity of things has to be pulverized in order to destroy the finite associations with which our society increasingly enshrouds every aspect of our environment."(40) A generation later Noland distanced his own work from Abstract Expressionism and what he felt was its vestigial over-reliance on symbolic associations. "We didn't want anything symbolic," he said about himself and Louis, "no subject matter other than the making of paintings."(41) Yet these painters would in their turn be opposed by another group even more dead-set on banishing metaphor. As Robert Morris summed up his project in the '60s, "I was out to rip out the metaphors."(42)

What perhaps made metaphor problematic was the distance and difference it preserves between the entities it brings into association. "To metaphorize well," as Paul Ricoeur translates Aristotle's formulation, "implies an intuitive perception of the similarity in dissimilars."(43) Metaphor allows interpretation some leeway, grants content a separate identity from form, at once expands or extends as well as displaces its object. Because it opens up an angle by which a figure is seen as both distanced and bridged by its predication, metaphor's action foregrounds viewpoint and perspective; as Kenneth Burke wrote in 1945, "for metaphor we could substitute perspective."(44) But this is precisely where problems arise: by casting the figure as itself and more than itself, metaphor generalizes the specific, it promises to enlarge the poetic but in doing so threatens to invade and disperse its singularity. It must have indeed felt like an invasion when in 1959 Life magazine, "undertak[ing] to explain how abstract expressionism developed and what it aims to communicate," ran a two-part pictorial feature (fig. 10) about how "the restless flickering of flames (below) recurs in the jagged, fluctuating shapes of a painting (opposite) by Clyfford Still," and how the work of Franz

Kline "recalls the dynamic thrusts and angles of the steel girders of a bridge," and how de Kooning's work "suggests the breadth, rugged force and endless variety that characterize not only vast scenes of nature but the tiniest patch of grass (top, right)."(45) Shortly after, Ad Reinhardt used the occasion of a panel discussion (the transcript from which was published in early 1961 in Scrap magazine) to complain about the Life feature and how "Still, de Kooning, and Rothko...permitted their work to be treated as flames, girders, grasses, and sunsets." Yet Reinhardt didn't just find blame in the artists, but also in the art:

> Now does the art permit this? ...A kind of art, perhaps that seems to excite or entertain...is involved in quickly exhausted values, in a kind of built-in obsolescence.... The artwork itself is the problem along with the artist.... The artwork itself doesn't seem to have a limit to that which can be read into it.... There is something wrong about an art that permits everybody to project their personal wishes into it.(46)

Indeed, opening interpretive space and entrusting viewers to fill it was exactly the formula touted by a booming postwar advertising industry; according to the infamous Dr. Ernest Dichter, pioneer of marketing or what was called "motivational" research (and a featured villain in Vance Packard's 1957 bestseller The Hidden Persuaders), "a sculpture, a painting, or a poster is better if it is somewhat incomplete, if the onlooker is invited to fill [it] in."(47) On the other hand, the kind of metaphors available to flesh out and complete cultural objects were, like Life magazine's, more often than not "fulsome or banal," "involved in quickly exhausted values." Especially so if a distinguishing feature of modern industrial culture is its fragmentation, its lack of any truly completing metaphors, any "consistent and repeatable meanings." "A poem by Eliot and a poem by Eddie Guest--what perspective of culture is

large enough," Greenberg shook his head, "to enable us to situate them in an enlightening relation to each other?"(48)

## Kenneth Burke and the Theory of Tropes

Harold Rosenberg also mourned the fate modern society held in store for Burke's notion of metaphoric perspective. "Competition forces our participating gestures into isolated atomic groups, each with an 'incongruous perspective' of its own; and style, becoming, as soon as it attempts to communicate meanings, an instrument of competition, is depleted of its poetic qualities."(49) This is from a sympathetic review Rosenberg wrote of Burke's 1935 anthology of essays Permanence and Change. Rosenberg had written about Burke dismissively four years earlier, but soon after the two developed a mutual and lasting admiration (indeed, Rosenberg later claimed that his own writing in the early '30s profoundly influenced Burke's intellectual growth). Like most everyone else around mid-century, Rosenberg acknowledged the importance of Burke's theories on art and literature, but also recognized them as being erected on the very faultline between rhetoric and poetics. Often labeled a New Critic for practicing strong formal analysis of literary works, Burke also suffered admonishment from more orthodox New Critics (including McLuhan and Blackmur) for his overly rhetorical interest in art as "symbolic action," as a grouping of figurative elements corresponding to a repertoire of psychological and social effects. This was pretty much the accusation leveled by Greenberg, who reviewed Burke's Philosophy of Literary Form: Studies in Symbolic Action for Partisan Review in 1941. While applauding the book for its ability to "stimulate, provoke and unsettle," Greenberg ultimately judged that it "fails to deal enough with the work of literature, the object itself."(50) All the same he, like Rosenberg, also maintained a collegial relationship with Burke, the two occasionally dining and socializing together.

Up till the late '50s Burke was a constant if somewhat inconspicuous presence within Manhattan's avant-garde milieu. After dropping out of Columbia in 1918 he lived with Stuart Davis and Berenice Abbott in Greenwich Village, and throughout the '20s worked as a writer and editor at The Dial (for which he famously handled the first U.S. publication of Eliot's The Waste Land). During the '30s he turned his energies away from fiction and criticism (he wrote on music as well as literature, serving as the music critic for The Nation from 1934 to '36) and toward the building of a self-made comprehensive philosophy he termed "dramatism." Burke's reputation peaked in the late '40s with the publication of the sister volumes A Grammar of Motives (1945) and A Rhetoric of Motives (1951). From 1943 to '61 he taught philosophy at Bennington, the progressive liberal arts college for women with a studio-art department headed by Paul Feeley and involving, at one time or another during the late '40s and '50s, such high profile artworld figures as David Smith, Gottlieb, Goossen, Alloway and Greenberg.

It was no doubt Burke's wide-ranging philosophical approach to the arts and strong belief in their profound social significance that led to his being invited--along with such cultural luminaries as Marcel Duchamp, Robert Goldwater, Arnold Schoenberg, Mark Tobey and Frank Lloyd Wright--to participate in "The Western Roundtable on Modern Art," the transcription of which was published in Modern Artists in America. In the same document that quotes Gottlieb, Motherwell, Newman, Hare and Stern all inveighing against the call for art to communicate to a general public, Burke is found insisting that no matter what "there is always communication.... The communication is there the minute the painting is done." Such a position was immediately countered in all the now familiar ways: Tobey responds, "But the artist, when he is painting, is not thinking of communication," to which Wright adds, "Not if he is a true artist." "It is wrong," Schoenberg chimes in, "for a serious composer to write or include in his works such parts which he

feels would please the audience." And Goldwater asks, "That division between communication on the one hand, which presupposes a public to whom the artist is talking, and integrity on the other, which presupposes that the artist is concerned only with himself...is it not a basic problem, not only for the artist in contemporary society, but for the individual--as individual?"(51)

Burke knows the argument well, and promptly sets it in a larger perspective:

> Poetic deals with the work in itself, its kind, its properties, the internal relations among its parts. Rhetoric deals with the work's persuasiveness, its appeal, and eventually involves ethical considerations.... Along about the beginning of the 19th century...aesthetics was conceived largely in terms of a flat antithesis to the practical. Hence, if the practical realm included the useful and the moral, then the aesthetic became, by the dialectics of the case, useless and nonmoral.(52)

Burke was also fully aware of the tension inherent to modernism between fragmentation and integration, a tension that conspired to further drive apart poetics and rhetoric and undermine the possibility of metaphoric communication. "Our culture," he continued, "will always be shifting between the norms of universal appeal on one side, and the requirements of specialization on the other. Occasionally you can expect a happy accident where the work meets both tests at once, but these moments will be comparatively rare." And yet, even while acknowledging how much the odds were stacked against the modern artist's attempt to metaphorically balance the general and specific, Burke insisted, like Cavell and Steinberg, on the artwork's directedness and intendedness. "Certainly [the artist] is not talking to himself, is he?" Burke kept arguing during the roundtable. "He is using a communicative structure of terms."(53)

Such a "communicative structure of terms" is precisely what Burke had committed his adult life to theorizing. According to Burke's system, this structure breaks down into four main modes of address, or "master tropes": beside metaphor, there are synecdoche, metonymy and irony. If, as Burke has it, "there is always communication," then any attempt to move beyond one mode of communication or address will only lead in the direction of another mode. Indeed, the basic ways in which metaphor is typically faulted seem to suggest a predilection for one of the three alternative tropes. The complaint that metaphoric association lacks the binding strength of religious meaning points toward synecdoche; the argument that metaphoric meaning lacks science's necessary motivation, objectivity and verifiability would move it toward metonymy; and those who look with suspicion upon the credibility of any meaningful equation between disparate entities would tend to favor irony. Generally, metaphor aligns with poetry, synecdoche with religion, metonymy with science, and irony with criticism and philosophy.

A brief glance at Burke's writing would make it seem that he hewed closely to the traditional conception of rhetoric as an art of persuasion, except that his definition of persuasion turns out to be broad indeed. If rhetoric concerns language in use, Burke, like Cavell and Steinberg, was quick to define use far beyond the bounds of intention. "The linguistic motive," he writes, "involves kinds of persuasion guided not by appeal to any one audience but by the logic of appeal in general." Dreams utilize rhetoric ("Freud's psyche is quite a parliament"); and the individual can be his own audience, though never can he achieve total isolation (rather he must "strive to form himself in accordance with communicative norms that match the cooperative ways of his society").(54) As Burke elaborates his system, the different tropes come to stand for basic predispositions toward formalizing or granting sense and shape to the world of things and their relations. In the

words of Hayden White, whose own writing in the '70s and '80s did much to adapt Burke's theories to poststructuralist debates, rhetoric allows one to "penetrate to that level of consciousness on which a world of experience is constituted prior to being analyzed."(55) In this view, rhetoric deals with not only how things are presented for understanding--with how to build arguments and make them persuasive--but with how understanding treats or figures those things presented to it, with how things like arguments and artworks are received. Rhetoric, defined this broadly, is inseparable from poetics, is "built" into it, to paraphrase Steinberg: rhetoric here describes the different postures that sensibility assumes when reckoning with experience, the various kinds of orientations or "directedness" by which artists and artworks define themselves and the world in which they take their stand.

## Modes of Address in the Late '50s and Early '60s

Following the Burkean "structure of terms," it is possible to see much of the visual art made in the late '50s and early '60s--that is, made in the wake of Pollock's "attack on metaphor"--as adopting the last three of these master tropes. Within this scheme, color-field painting can be seen as an attempt to move beyond metaphor toward synecdoche. If what distinguishes metaphor is the awareness it maintains of a difference between the two things it nevertheless associates, synecdoche is that mode of representation that stresses not difference but proximity, identification and sameness between entities. It is that class of tropes or figures in which, according to Burke, "part [stands] for the whole, whole for the part, container for the contained, sign for the thing signified, material for the thing made," that implies "an integral relationship, a relationship of convertibility... proclaiming the identity between 'microcosm' and 'macrocosm.'"(56) Describing his work in the '60s, Noland

constantly stressed the themes of connection, inclusion and convertibility. He likened the relationship between viewer and image to the one between a romantically involved couple: as he put it, "You're involved with someone as long as something is developing, changing or insightful. Painting is the same way." Connection, as if without resistance or remainder, was paramount: it is "that quality of connection I'd like those colors to have."(57) Here is echoed Burke's description of synecdoche as emphasizing "the connectedness between two sides of an equation...from quantity to quality or from quality to quantity" (a quote which itself recalls Paul de Man's observation that "the continuity from part to whole makes synecdoche into the most seductive of metaphors").(58)

The paintings of Noland and Louis, with their colors soaked evenly into and across expanses of canvas, emphasize their constituent materials but only to equate those materials with the vital, exacting capabilities of modernist viewing. In Louis's Veils, for example (fig. 2), pigment spreads along and reinforces the painting's material surface, but it also rises and falls in accordance with gravity, as if to provide a surrogate figure for the viewer; each Veil is thus both figure and landscape, identified at once with the lateral reach of the painting as object and the centering line of the viewer's eyesight. What results is a fusion between distant and proximate vision, and, beyond that, a harmonizing of overview and close-up, the many and the one, the general and the specific, not to mention the poetically figured and the literal contingencies that such figuration depends on if only to transcend.

By denying the importance of brushwork and minimizing traces of the artist's labor, both of these painters can be said to have privileged the act of reception over production, looking over making. But that doesn't mean they weren't also wary of the abuses that had become associated with art's afterlife in exhibition and interpretation. Both often spoke of the immediacy and directness they sought in their work;

for them, reception was thought of not as a locale opposed to the studio but as having no locale at all, as happening within "eyesight alone." "I believe in working quickly and simply," Noland asserted, "it's all direct."(59) In their pursuit of immediacy both followed closely the Abstract Expressionists before them. "The need is for felt experience," Motherwell claimed; for "direct sensual experience," to quote again Ibram Lassaw. Rothko used the word "clarity," which for him meant "elimination of all obstacles between painter and idea and between idea and observer." "To achieve this clarity," Rothko continued, "is inevitably to be understood"--or, put another way, to defend against misunderstanding.(60)

For Louis and Noland, however, this "idea" that Rothko sought to clearly reveal was itself deemed an obstacle to immediacy. According to Noland, color-field painting "was a new way to make abstract art without having some preconception of what your art was to be like or to be about: subject matter, figuration, symbolism, allusion or things outside."(61) Not even subject matter stood between painting and viewer; all surrounding space separating the two was squeezed out by the intimate proximity of their encounter and the instant of looking. Here was a safe place where a kind of looking could occur without threat of misappropriation and misunderstanding, where interpretation wasn't allowed any leeway, where the viewer either identified with the painting and melded with it--"disappeared" into it--or was left at a loss, feeling distanced by so much blank linen and spilt paint. "One is either in or out," as Michael Fried described such work in 1965.(62)

But this wasn't the only defense available to painters--or rather, this mode of address suggested a related but different mode. One could instead make paintings that purposely distanced the viewer, gave themselves over to viewing while also deliberately steeling themselves against it, in which only mute and irrefutable fact was presented, in which "what you see is what you see." The direction in which

many minimalists took Pollock's example was toward metonymy. Rather than suggest a complete fusion between the realms of the material and immaterial, inside and outside, as with synecdoche, with metonymy a reduction occurs in only one direction, toward the material, from intrinsic to extrinsic, from quality to quantity. Whereas Louis and Noland equated eyesight and painted field, subject and object, Donald Judd and Frank Stella assimilated art to the latter. "The inner glow that illuminates Reinhardt's works becomes a mechanical surface shine in Stella's," Irving Sandler complained in 1960.(63) Hilton Kramer had much the same reaction to Judd's first solo show three years later: "One is again made conscious of the shift away from the analytic and metaphorical style to the more literal mode of utterance making itself felt at the present time."(64) Mel Bochner also noted minimalism's "conscious avoidance of anthropomorphic metaphor and the consequent tragic outlook."(65) It "struck one as the difference between a poet and a reporter," Kramer wrote of the gap he perceived between the new literalism and the "older metaphorical bias...utterly personal and yet expressive of a more general philosophy of art in which visual metaphor and imagination dominated the brute donnée of the artist's material."

By shifting all emphasis to exteriority, the minimalist object expects to be viewed from a distance, even by the artist; it didn't matter if someone else made the work. Unlike Fried, for whom "stepping back is what's wrong...[it] ruins the work," Judd treated distance as a measure of success, as if it were the necessary condition for any artwork's full assertion of itself; as if, in order to thrive, to achieve originality and independence, to present things in their own right, an artwork had to disassociate, even oppose itself to its viewer, had to remain to a certain extent unknowable.(66) Indeed, when writing criticism early in the '60s it was this quality that Judd praised in the work of others. About Lee Bontecou's wall reliefs Judd wrote, "The object is at eye level...it has to be dealt with as any

strange object...as would be a beached mine or a well hidden in the grass."(67) Although Bontecou's art glares directly at the viewer, it does so with a dead eye, thus establishing not connection or empathy but rather distance and guardedness.

As for his own works (fig. 11), which Judd called "specific objects"--a decidedly anti-general generalization--their aggressive materials, blocky, inert shapes and bland repetitions all combine to obscure any sense of their having a definable frontal aspect by which to present themselves, a face with which they welcome viewing. Judd himself explained in an interview that "in most of my pieces there are no front or sides--it depends on the viewing position of the observer. It's obvious that the floor pieces have no front."(68) The result was a "a menacing anonymity," as Lucy Lippard wrote in a 1964 review.(69) Even Judd's wall-reliefs (fig. 12), which seem to have frontality forced on them, actually turn their attention sideways, perpendicular to the line of sight, extending themselves laterally or horizontally, repeating their component parts either up and down or across the wall. As was often noted, both Judd and modernists like Noland shared a preoccupation with the artwork's framing edge, only their concerns couldn't be more different. Whereas Noland fretted over how the literalness of his paintings' edges--where the image turns a 45-degree corner and reveals the three-dimensionality of an object--threatened to mitigate synecdochic fusion by reducing the pictorial too thoroughly to the material, much of Judd's impatience with painting had to do with how its framing edge forced a frontal orientation, an invitingness, on whatever it circumscribed. For Judd, the picture frame inherently induced illusionism by establishing stage-like sight lines, defining the pictorial field as belonging entirely to the viewer's gaze--thus the frame itself figures human vision, and by extension thought and belief, already flooding the rectangle with representation before a single mark gets laid down. Instead Judd wanted his holistic shapes to evade that system and to sit as if outside it, in what his nemesis Fried called "an indeterminate, open-

ended and unexacting relation" to the viewer.(70) Judd aimed for his work to both impose itself on its audience and remain indifferent, to aggressively occupy the viewer's space yet turn away, offering vision only blunt objectivity, the artwork as perfect stranger.

Finally, no rhetorical portrait of the '60s would be complete without a mention of irony, the most exemplary manifestation of which was pop art. Hayden White has described irony as "a self-conscious use of metaphor... designed to inspire second thoughts about the nature of the thing characterized."(71) Often irony is produced through a contradictory pairing of two or more other tropes, thus calling into question the adequacy or legitimacy of figuring certain things or of figuration in general. Roy Lichtenstein, for instance, would use the rigid regularity of Benday dots to depict a spontaneous, excitable brushstroke; Warhol's portraits invite metaphoric investment in the celebrities they depict and at the same time confound that investment through the metonymic, production-line repetition and coarse printing of each celebrity's image. Like the minimalist object, pop assumes a certain detachment from its viewers, but unlike minimalism it doesn't offer in return the certainty of objective fact. At the same time, if pop reinstates the metaphors Pollock had banished, it also insists that those metaphors not be taken too seriously.

As such, pop irony could be considered as yet another manifestation in the '60s of an artistic strategy mixing visual assertion and defense. That at least was how Susan Sontag saw it in her 1964 essay "Against Interpretation," in which she explicitly aligns pop art with color-field painting and minimalist objects. Sontag writes, "Pop Art works by using a content so blatant, so 'what it is,' it, too, ends up being uninterpretable."(72) Fred Orton has recently reached a similar conclusion in his tropological analysis of Jasper Johns's work; Orton describes Johns as mixing metaphor and metonymy so as to produce "meanings...that are publicly kept at a distance."(73) Johns's art, like that of Lichtenstein

and Warhol, beckons identifications explicitly avoided by much of minimalism and color-field painting; not only does it make use of representation, it also references the studio and assigns hand-wrought brushwork a prominent role. Yet what Johns ends up producing are slippages between brushwork and image, making and looking. As Greenberg wrote in 1962,

> Johns is interested in the literary irony that results from representing flat and artificial configurations which in actuality can only be reproduced...the painterly paintedness of Johns's picture sets off, and is set off by, the flatness of his number, letter, target, flag, and map images.... Everything that usually serves representation and illusion is left to serve nothing but itself, that is abstraction; while everything that usually serves the abstract or decorative--flatness, bare outlines, allover or symmetrical design--is put to the service of representation.(74)

Such an ironic mode of address results, once again, in artworks that can be taken as both assertive and guarded.

Looking back, it would appear that by the mid '60s irony became the dominant of the four modes in art making--and has remained so to this day.(75) Even color-field painting came to be seen with a degree of detachment and irony. The synecdochic transparency and directness that someone like Noland sought for his paintings quickly grew cloudy and opaque; it was as if that transparency had "silted up," to borrow the description Rosalind Krauss used in response to Noland's 1966 show at Andre Emmerich. To feel the immediacy of such paintings now seemed to require some form of indoctrination, a mediation, something like a study guide: as Krauss put it, "access to them can only be achieved by a long chain of explanation."(76) The synecdochic modernist defense against misinterpretation grew into an interpretation in its own right; and suddenly it was the modernist viewer, not just

journalists and scene-makers, who drew suspicion, who was regarded as someone who could only misappropriate artworks. During the '70s and '80s postmodernist critics would theorize misappropriation as unavoidable; whether labeled ideology, myth or allegory, this new form of misinterpretation instituted a distance once again between the sign's components, between the reality of the signifier (whether it lay within the unconscious, the mode of production or a materiality as formless and alien as Pollock's flung paint) and the misrecognitions of the viewer's signifieds. But unlike with metaphor, that distance was now unbridgeable.

Indeed, the inaugural moment of postmodernism, of the sense of the always unavoidable possibility--the inevitability even--of the misunderstanding and prejudice that Motherwell, Reinhardt et al. feared, could be located at just this juncture in the '60s and the attempt then to make direct, univocal, intensely poetic art that opened nevertheless onto multiple and conflicting interpretations, a cacophony of rhetoric. But the clear-cut division between modernism and postmodernism itself suppresses the sociality and polyvalence of the rhetorical, and indeed institutes new "pure" monological forms (the floating signifier, the index, the informe, etc.). Unlike such rigid dualisms as modernism versus postmodernism, the four master tropes represent more fluid modalities. Here Kenneth Burke and Hayden White prove exemplary in the way they approach rhetoric so as to resist the dualistic, including the dualism that rhetorical analysis itself has so often been reduced to over the course of the 20th century--namely, a reduction to metaphor and metonymy. Although this collapse of distinctions between the many rhetorical modes had already begun in the 17th and 18th centuries, establishing the dominance of the metaphor-metonymy pair is often credited to the work done in the 1920s and '30s by the Russian Formalists Boris Eichenbaum and especially Roman Jakobson. Thus simplified, these dyadic terms have since been superimposed onto a number of

ideological oppositions, including modernism and postmodernism. As Gerard Genette has observed:

> In the metaphor-metonymy couple, it is tempting to see the opposition between the spirit of religious transcendence and the down-to-earth spirit, dedicated to the immanence of the here-below.... Horizontal versus vertical. Minds could be classified in the same way as "materialists" (the prosaic), those who--like Freud--privilege "contact" and see in similarity only its pale reflection, and "spiritualists" (the poetic), driven on the contrary to elude contact, or at least to sublimate it in terms of analogy.(77)

Furthermore, many see the metaphor-metonymy reduction as a means to subsume rhetoric within Saussurian linguistics, with metaphor mapped onto the paradigmatic pole of language (langue) and metonymy onto its syntagmatic axis (parole).(78) In this way, the shift away from modernism toward postmodernism has--ironically, as it were--kept in tact a privileging of poetics (now characterized in terms of highly abstract linguistic models such as "floating signifiers") and a denial of rhetoric (once again denigrated as social instrumentalization through simplistic referentiality). As Thomas Crow has argued, with the postmodernist adoption of semiotics and structuralism,

> the universal language of [this] new theory...made it possible to continue without a break the modernist preoccupation with inherently abstract processes of sign-making and sign-receiving. The values and forms of attention fostered by the critics of the 1960s had in fact prepared the ground thoroughly for the new French models. The [postmodernist] writers centered around the journal October have generally been just as vigilant against any return to "the referent" in art...as Clement Greenberg and Michael Fried had been before them.(79)

It was a commonplace in the 1960s for formalist critics to adopt linguistic analogies, especially when it came to analyzing abstract art in terms of its "grammar." In 1965, for example, Fried wrote about the tendency of painters like Noland, Louis and Stella to work in series, thereby "mark[ing] significant alterations of pictorial structure; ...[serial paintings] signify related transformations of syntax in the interest of saying something new (or perhaps in the interest of saying something at all)."(80) As in his discussion two years earlier of the impersonal "logic of metaphor" at work in Louis's paintings, Fried's appeal to pictorial syntax assumes a model of poetic, monological utterance that is decidedly antagonistic to rhetoric. "Pure grammar," as Paul de Man explains, "postulates the possibility of unproblematic, dyadic meaning, and pure logic...postulates the possibility of the universal truth of meanings."(81) Yet such an appeal to grammar must be seen in the context of Fried's worries over modernist painting's relationship to minimalist objects, how both form "a response to the same developments" and yet stand "in direct conflict." Claiming the sanction of grammatical correctness in such a situation becomes strategic precisely because the situation is so rhetorically fraught, so prone to deflected meanings and misappropriations. "The series," Fried admits, "has become one of modernist painting's chief defenses against the risk of misinterpretation--a risk that has grown enormously during the past 20 years in direct proportion to the success of modernism itself." "Rhetoric," de Man continues, "radically suspends logic and opens up vertiginous possibilities of referential aberration...when it is impossible to decide by grammatical or other linguistic devices which of the two meanings (that can be entirely incompatible) prevails." Rhetoric accounts for this undecidability and aberration not just because it involves persuasion and external actions between people but also because it is "an intralinguistic figure or trope."(82) That

is, it is both text and context; it is an opening out of the poetic from "in the poem."

The master tropes of rhetorical analysis, when restored to a four-fold schematic, exhibit a much greater flexibility than is found in binary oppositions, a flexibility to which their "undecidability"--the fact that tropes are incredibly hard to keep separate from one another--testifies. Metonymy and synecdoche, for example, are notorious for their simultaneous overlap and divergence, and perhaps for this very reason are so often simply collapsed. As Paul Ricoeur notes, the confusion stems from the fact that, much more than metaphor, both synecdoche and metonymy "connect objects prior to connecting ideas"; that is, they deal almost entirely in the realm of nouns, whereby "one object is designated by the name of another."(83) Both synecdoche and metonymy are commonly said to establish this connection between objects by way of their physical contiguity, but this is strictly true only for metonymy. Synecdoche, Genette argues, "concerns in fact an inclusion, or belonging...and of a logical rather than spatial type." He continues:

> It is not at all certain that one can legitimately regard inclusion, even in its most crudely spatial forms, as a particular case of contiguity. This reduction no doubt has its origin in an almost inevitable confusion between the relation of the part to the whole [synecdoche] and the relation of this same part to the other parts that make up the whole [metonymy]: a relation, it might be said, of the part to the remainder. The sail is not contiguous to the ship, but it is contiguous to the mast and the yard and, by extension, to the rest of the ship.(84)

Calling both synecdoche and metonymy tropes of contiguity thus favors the latter and anticipates the former's reduction to it, a move that renders synecdoche redundant and

foreshadows the only survivors being the binary opposites metaphor and metonymy.

If metonymy and synecdoche are kept distinct, however, their frequent intersections prove more often contradictory and tense than complimentary and mutually reinforcing. Indeed, their uneasy interplay can be seen sparking many of the arguments that raged over '60s art. Judd, for example, agreed that his art and that of the modernists formed "a response to the same developments" (his enthusiasm for painters like Noland led Philip Leider, editor of Artforum at the time, to remark on how Judd's "writing in many cases made similar judgments [as Greenberg and Fried] but from an utterly different point of view").(85) Both Judd and Greenberg constantly stressed modern art's materiality. "A shape, color, surface are things themselves," Judd asserted; "things that exist exist, and everything is on their side."(86) Here Judd echoes Greenberg's earlier argument that "the superiority of the medium over what it figures... expresses our society's growing impotence to organize experience in any other terms than those of concrete sensation, immediate return, tangible datum.... Modern life can be radically confronted, understood and dealt with only in material terms. What matters is not what one believes but what happens to one."(87) For Greenberg only such intense materialism could "cut through to the ultimate truth of life as it is lived at present...life reduced to solely empirical considerations and without the deception (but also protection) of faith in anything." "Of course, finally," Judd wrote, "I only believe my own work."(88)

No doubt it was Judd's demand for metonymic reduction and material specificity--for, in his words, "definite structure, defined color, developed texture and consequent validity of expression"--that led him to give up on over 10 years of painting on canvas and in 1962 turn to nontraditional materials like aluminum and Plexiglas, materials that the artist admired for their "obdurate identity."(88) Greenberg and Fried, on the other hand, never

went so far as to propose surface and material as sovereign facts, parts to be taken as wholes onto themselves. "The flatness toward which modernist painting orients itself can never be absolute flatness," Greenberg insisted; painting's material conditions--"the deliberate choosing of a flat surface and the deliberate circumscribing of it"--these "limiting conditions are altogether human conditions," themselves figures of sensibility, thought, intent.(90) Or, as Fried put it, "There's no distinction one can make between attending to the surface of the painting and to the illusion it generates; to be gripped by one is to be held, and moved, by the other."(91) Here the material and immaterial gain definition only as parts contributing to a larger ensemble, a greater and more complete whole (to which Greenberg and Fried would give such names as medium, quality, self-criticism, tradition, or simply "modernist painting"). "What is at stake," Fried wrote of the differences between modernists and minimalists, "is whether [the works] in question are experienced as paintings or as objects."(92) Whether, that is, the art is able to make its metonymic object-status vulnerable to synecdochal connection, capable of yielding insight, of being pressed into by motivated perception and pressing back in turn, challenging, informing, shaping the disposition and will of the perceiver. "A great work of art is the result of an interaction between the artist and his age," Greenberg wrote of the synecdochal relation between art's parts and wholes, "whereby the personality of one and the content of the other receive their most appropriate, most spiritualized or 'ideal' expression and thus touch, by a kind of dialectical process, that which is profoundly common to all humanity in all ages." Thus the material and immaterial, the external and internal, the literal and figurative, the contingent and transcendent come together and expand into a greater summary or order, as "pigment, canvas, stone, bronze are resolved into forms that belong purely to human consciousness."(93)

The difference emerges clearly when comparing the favorable reactions both Fried and Judd had to the work of Barnett Newman (fig. 13). When Fried confronted the flatness of one of Newman's paintings, he felt its "field begin to give way, to yield--palpably, as it were--to the probings of the eye."(94) But when Judd looked at the very same work, he found its "openness concomitant with chance...the work doesn't suggest a great scheme of knowledge; it doesn't claim more than anyone can know; it doesn't imply a social order."(95) Judd's praise of Newman's paintings unveils a scene of estrangement; he and the artwork greet each other in their mutual isolation from anything greater than themselves, from any grand scheme or mystery that might connect them; each pays respect to the other's sovereignty and separateness. Yet it can also be argued that Judd, in his turn, couldn't keep such an approach to art, or even his own work for that matter, entirely immune to metaphor. His praise for specific objects, for artworks isolated within their literal materials and circumstances and from each other, was to a certain extent a way of modeling his anarchist political beliefs, his vision of a world comprised of sovereign and separate individuals. "Instead of making cathedrals out of Christ, man, or 'life,' we are making it out of ourselves," he approvingly quotes his fellow anarchist Newman.(96)

Indeed, the need to keep things separate, independent from sweeping generalizations, was one of the few general pronouncements Judd ever allowed himself to make, as when he wrote in 1964 that "categories are only categories by the common presence of a single very general aspect. A person could select other common elements which would make other groups. The proportion of things not in common far exceeds the things that are."(97) Judd's metonymy expressed his distrust of the presumed higher laws or underlying orders that authorized the collecting together of disparate things through analogy. An example of such an analogy, one that Greenberg used, is that "a painting must breathe...its breath is to be made of the texture and body of canvas and

paint."(98) Richard Shiff has elaborted on "Greenberg's metaphoric description":

> the painting surface breathes its color out, the applied pigment having insinuated itself as an integral feature of the painting's physicality. The analogy is to the human body, of course; it draws its air in and out, and can never be entirely devoid of air, which, as a consequence of birth, becomes as essential an element of the body as is flesh.(99)

Another common analogy that Greenberg employed was that "a painting [is] like a living organism" in that it "exists by the simultaneous relation of its parts."(100) But this, for Judd, is "like Poussin saying order underlies nature. Poussin's order is anthropomorphic."(101) To avoid the vast induction of things into such colonizing analogies, Judd emphasized the specific over the general, the local over the universal, surface over depth. Each specific, local part would be treated as a whole in its own right, not as a gateway to some greater commonality; association between units would be established only through external contact, without their yielding to some deeper, shared, more authoritative essence. Any "order" resulting from such association is thus "not rationalistic and underlying but is simply order, like that of continuity, one thing after another."(102) This became Judd's artistic program:

> All I'm interested in is having a work interesting to me as a whole.... Anything that is not absolutely plain begins to have parts in some way...[and] the more parts a thing has, the more important order becomes, and finally order becomes more important than anything else.(103)

According to such a metonymic view, artworks are no longer to be compared to living organisms or to any other

general order of being, not even to other artworks. "The new art," wrote Mel Bochner, "deals with the surface of matter and avoids its heart."(104) Irving Sandler nodded in agreement: "These artists describe only the surface of the world around them, impervious to any system of meaning."(105) But at this point, there begins to emerge yet another overlap between tropes, this time between metonymy and irony. Bochner's line was written in response to the three-dimensional abstract geometries that filled the "Primary Structures" show at the Jewish Museum in 1966, while Sandler's line was devoted to the representational pop art featured in the 1962 "New Realists" exhibit at the Sidney Janis Gallery. "Underlying much of New Realism is a metaphysic similar to that of such French 'objectivists' as [Alain] Robbe-Grillet," Sandler writes a sentence earlier; Bochner borrows a quote from Robbe-Grillet's "For a New Novel" ("there is nothing behind these surfaces, no inside, no secret, no hidden motive") to begin his minimalism review. (Brian O'Doherty also cited Robbe-Grillet in a 1966 overview of minimalism, calling the French novelist "the theoretician-in-residence" for the new abstract sculpture.)(106) What metonymy and irony can be said to share is a mutual opposition to the kind of commonalities and connections that metaphor and synecdoche confidently erect from one object--or attribute or facet or state--to another. But whereas metonymy goes no further than the object's obdurate externals, treating surface as a legitimate, "final" destination in its own right, irony only ever returns back to the surface since every association it launches from there leads astray. Leo Steinberg gets at the distinction when describing Johns's works and particularly their ironic surfaces, which for Steinberg serve as scenes not of boastful wholeness, declarations of objective fact, but rather of abandonment and resignation:

> When Franz Kline lays down a swath of black paint, that paint is transfigured. ...Paint and canvas stand for

> more than themselves. Pigment is still the medium by which something seen, thought, or felt, something other than pigment itself, is made visible.... But [Johns], if he wants something three-dimensional, resorts to a plaster cast and builds a box to contain it. When he paints on a canvas he can only paint what's flat--numbers, letters, a target, a flag. Everything else, it seems, would be a childish game--"let's pretend." ...There is no more metamorphosis.(107)

As the tropic flexibility and interplay of the late '50s and early '60s demonstrate, no one mode of address has an inside track on pulling off aesthetic effect; the four modes represent--are themselves metaphors for--basic ways of perceiving and engaging the world, and as such they can be thought of as cognitive templates or schema, each with its own capacity to resonate pleasurably when struck by an artwork that meshes just so with its particular specifications. Such a view of rhetoric could be called Kantian ("I will not apologize for this Kantian element in my thought," writes Hayden White), but it is also very synecdochic.(108) Indeed, descriptions of aesthetic experience often rely on extended synecdoches, on conjuring integral, organic, continuous connections between inner and outer realms. At the same time, it could be argued in turn that using rhetorical modes to figure cognitive predispositions may be advantageous in that they make so blatant their status as figures, as metaphors, and thereby infiltrate into our definitions of aesthetic perception the play of textuality, the unavoidable slipperiness of figural identity. That would be a more ironic view of the matter.

Countering White, Paul de Man perhaps best articulates this more ironic view. For de Man, the figures of rhetoric subvert consciousness even as they constitute it. He, too, assigns figuration a dual role, seeing it as the basis for what he calls our "cognitive" as well as "performative" activities. On the one hand, at a "pre-ideological" level of

cognition, consciousness figures perception of the world of objects and their relations; on the other hand, it also figures those expressions we put back out into the world in the form of arguments and artworks. De Man stresses how this division parallels the opposition between grammar and rhetoric (or, borrowing again from Mills, the "overheard" and "heard"), the former bound by the "impersonal precision" of logic and the assumed naturalness of sensibility, while the latter is aligned more with deliberateness and calculation, with "the self-willed and autonomous inventiveness of a subject." But de Man sees in each side of this opposition the other's undoing. For him, what we take to be cognition of a pre-existent world is itself a performative act of naming and labeling; figuration doesn't describe or denominate but actively posits; its action is not substantive but semiotic. At the same time, what might appear a deliberate act of rhetorical argument is itself a dutiful following of tropic laws; the rhetorician doesn't persuade through figures but is persuaded by them; the "self-willed" subject is in fact an effect of language, not its manipulator. Neither the performative subject figuring, nor the cognated object that is being figured, is able to comandeer figures for its own sake. Both only follow the dictates internal to figuration, and these dictates offer up neither logical certainties nor humanist revelations.(109)

## Burke and White on Tropic Interaction

Even among those devoted to theorizing the four tropes, such as Kenneth Burke and Hayden White, there proves to be a good deal of room for disagreement over how these modes of address and their interaction should be defined and distinguished. For example, White, as a historian, tends to see the four tropes as interacting chronologically, in what he calls "the archetypal plot of discursive formations." White describes tropic transformations as following a fixed sequential order:

"The characteristic 'I' of the discourse moves from an original metaphorical characterization of a domain of experience, through metonymic deconstructions of its elements, to synecdochic representations of the relations between its superficial attributes and its presumed essence, to, finally, ironic reflection on the inadequacy of the characterization with respect to the elements which resist inclusion in the hypotactically ordered totality."(110) On the other hand, Burke, a literary critic, tends to privilege what he calls logical derivation over chronological descent, essences over existence. But what Burke finds in essences are precisely resources for logical transformations, and for this reason he too seems to grant priority to metaphor, which he calls at times simply perspective but at other times "perspective by incongruity." Metaphor is crucial to his overall analytical procedure; it is the first move, the seeing of one thing through, or from the perspective of, another. By generating distinction out of nondistinction it is the first transformation.

But already complications begin to arise. For metaphor to retain its identity, there is a sense in which it can't come first, radiating other terms, but instead must come after or come alone. That is, if metaphor stands as the founding and hence also summational or titular term, then it becomes the representative part that stands for the whole of tropics, and thus transforms into a different trope, synecdoche. Indeed, representation is Burke's synonym for synecdoche, which at times he even designates as "the 'basic' figure of speech," citing the common use of representation when speaking of political, artistic, and sensory or cognitive matters.(111) Unlike synecdoche, what metaphor can't be basic to is language as order--it is too wily for that. It can't become titular or constitutional, since, as Burke points out, when its perspective is incongruous it "interprets new situations by removing words from their constitutional setting."(112) Metaphor has no allegiance to congruity or incongruity, which can be ascertained only

through considerations of context; it simply spans and connects, and in this way it is basic: its movement is the basis for--depending on the context of existing relationships--both synecdochic commonalities and ironic incongruities, as well as for their transformations; it is transformational movement itself. But this basicness or neutrality exists only in theory. That is perhaps why granting metaphor chronological priority poses such problems: doing so means having to conjure up a pure origin, outside any prior set of relationships or context, thus outside history itself.

If at times Burke is prone to view synecdoche as basic, it is because synecdoche best characterizes what he imagines is communication in its purest state, from which it derives and towards which it aspires, language or figuration as our second nature ("there is always communication," he tells the Western Roundtable on Modern Art) wherein both our particular contingencies and our general, common or even higher aspirations are harmonized, where communication becomes communion. Running counter to this movement, Burke pits metonymy as misrepresentation. Metonymy is a type of linguistic transformation that seeks clarity by trying to eliminate transformation per se; it is a reduction rather than an expansion, reducing whole to part, the figurative to the literal, text to context (or, as Burke would put it, "act" to "scene"). Burke treats metonymy as synonymous with reduction, since it strives to boil things down to the kind of material and mechanistic contingencies that characterize the local, thus localizing the general, reducing the common to the specific. It ends up as misrepresentation by trying to avoid representation itself. In the end, metonymy is the trope Burke eyes with the greatest suspicion.

All the same, it is important to remember that the relationship between synecdoche and metonymy shouldn't be phrased as too starkly oppositional. Pierre Bourdieu, for instance, remarks on the fraught overlap between the

synecdoches of religion and the metonyms of science in their common claim to universality:

> The polysemy of religious languages, and the ideological effect of the unification of opposites or denial of divisions which it produces, derive from the fact that...it manages to speak to all groups and all groups speak it--unlike, for example, mathematical language, which can secure the univocal meaning of the word "group" only by strictly controlling the homogeneity of the group of mathematicians. Religions which are called universal are not universal in same sense and on same conditions as science.(113)

Representation and misrepresentation share close quarters, as do summation and reduction (Burke even concedes at times to the familiar definition of metonymy as "a special application of synecdoche").(114) In its promise of perfect union, synecdoche can be just as anti-transformational as metonymy. While Burke often speaks glowingly of the synecdochal, he also at times strikes an apprehensive note; as a summational or titular figure synecdoche can often lend itself more to contemplation than action, it can appear static, "statuesque."(115) Indeed, some of Burke's most chilling cautionary passages seem to curiously blend synecdoche and metonymy, communion and reduction. From the vantage of the late 1940s, at the end of the depression and World War II, Burke writes of how men can "commune with carnage, how they love the sheer hierarchal pageantry, the Stoicism of the disciplinary drill, the sense of unity in the communal act of all the different military orders marching in step, or the pious contemplation of the parade made static and 'eternal' in the design of a military burial grounds."(116) Here the synecdochal communion of different orders commingles with metonymic lockstep and the most brute, untransformed elements of human behavior.

Metonymy and synecdoche (or what White might call the "paratactic" and the "hypotactic") are in fact posed by Burke as the twin dangers facing an overly technological and bureaucratized society, a society suffering simultaneously from too much fragmentation and too much integration, that is too specialized as well as too massified. "To what extent," he asks, "can we avoid the piecemeal response of dissipation (a response content simply to take whatever opportunities are nearest at hand) and the response of fanaticism (that would impose a terminology of motives upon the whole world regardless of the great dialectic interchange still to be completed)?"(117) Here society teeters between two fates: either a metonymic contiguity, an inability to see beyond individual, partisan needs and motives, beyond the piecemeal, literal and local (those "opportunities nearest at hand"), or a prematurely synecdochic, fanatical global summation. Of course, the real fear was that modern society was doomed to suffer both fates at once, in the form of Fascism, whether communist or capitalist, whereby, as Rosenberg put it, "there exists a kind of human dead center in which everyone is identical with everyone else," so that "all of mankind" can be made to "twitch at once." Burke and Arendt expressed this fear often, as did scores of others, including Greenberg:

> Now that Western industrial capitalism [Greenberg wrote in 1944] is in the process of establishing a global economy with coordinated methods of production on all continents, the possibility of a global Culture appears. Only socialism can realize such a Culture, and it could do so only by accepting and even encouraging regional variations. Meanwhile...the colonial Cultures...are being done to death by mass-produced, ready-made commodities exported from New York and California. There will soon be little diversity of Cultures for Mr. Eliot's common religious faith to unify. There will be just greater and lesser degrees of backwardness; and the unifying agents will be movies, comic books, Tin Pan

> Alley, the Luce publications (with editions in all languages), Coca Cola, rayon stockings, class interests, and a common boss. These are all quite compatible, incidentally, with religion, but not at all with socialism.(118)

The socialism Greenberg imagined as an alternative--wherein society nurtures rather than liquidates individuality and community as ends in themselves--is close to what Burke called the "great dialectical interchange." This is where Burke placed his hopes. Synecdoche must be complemented by dialectic--that is, by movement, interaction and debate. If synecdoche represents figuration or communication in its fullest potentiality, its most lyric state, it is still only the inactive ground and resource from which action and transformation dialectically arise. An emphasis on dialectic as movement is what aligns it with metaphor, making it into a kind of generalized and temporalized metaphor-of-metaphors (or, as Burke sometimes calls dialectic, a "perspective of perspectives"). But for Burke dialectic is instead a synonym for irony. If synecdoche is constitutional, dialectical irony is Burke's parliament; it is the interaction of metaphoric perspectives; it amplifies and generalizes what is implicit in metaphor, what Burke calls "the paradox of substance": that A, by being defined through not-A, equals not-A. Only this kind of dialectical irony can do the work of, can truly prepare the ground for, a harmonizing of the different orders, of higher and lower, intrinsic and extrinsic, general and specific, scene and act.

Synecdoche and metonymy most dramatically shed their apparent oppositional relation when teamed against the counter-duo of metaphor and irony. The former pair can be considered tropes of simplicity: whereas with synecdoche all elements share in one ultimate common identity, with metonymy each element is seen to possess its own unique identity. Either way, there is no difference or friction within identity per se (recalling Bourdieu's comments, synecdochic

religion can to be seen to claim universal identity through its accommodation and assimilation of all cultural connotations, whereas metonymic science achieves universality through its elimination of connotation altogether). Irony and metaphor, on the other hand, accommodate or privilege disparities and complexities within identity. While Burke at times sees dialectic as leading the way to transcendence (he gives the example of the worker who identifies not with his local miseries over his job but with the goals of the proletariat, and thus generalizes and makes representative his situation, which becomes both individual and not-individual, local and not-local), most often he characterizes irony as making dialectics impossible to complete and finalize once and for all. Thus irony turns out to be Burke's most temporalized trope, vigilant and tireless, in constant motion in relation to static balance, always moving away from a previous balance toward a newer one, weaving together the "part of" with the "apart from."

It is in their discussions of irony that Burke and White reveal one of their sharpest disagreements. According to White, writing from deep within the postmodernist '70s, "as the basis of a world view, irony tends to dissolve all belief in the possibility of positive political actions...to engender belief in the 'madness' of civilization itself and to inspire a Mandarin-like disdain for those seeking to grasp the nature of social reality in either science or art."(119) White here sees irony as leaning toward apathy, while Burke, writing under the pressing threat of totalitarianism, sees irony as precisely political (as parliamentary) in that it holds out hope for breaking up totalitarianism's prematurely synecdochic certainties through the introduction of difference and mobility. Yet Burke too speaks at times about ironic impasse and frustration: if within an ironic perspective identifications are challenged by an awareness of counter-identifications and competing perspectives, a generalized sense of irony can lead beyond a self-critical attitude to a total loss of belief in identification per se.

Unlike an ultimate or synecdochic order, a "dialectical order would place...competing voices in a jangling relation to one another...[whereas] the 'ultimate' order would place these competing voices themselves in a hierarchy, or sequence, or evaluative series...there would be a 'guiding idea' or 'unitary principle' behind the diversity of voices."(120) In other words, an overly generalized irony can result in a piecemeal metonymic relativism, a localizing of the general, with only contiguous "voices confront[ing] one another as disrelated competitors"--a situation in which, as Judd would put it, there is only "one thing after another."

The problem can perhaps be clarified by borrowing a favored tactic of Burke's, one he used often in drawing out what he called "the paradox of substance." If the substance of irony lies in its being a perspective of perspectives, transformations will occur as emphasis is shifted from the first to the second of its related terms; that is, if stress is placed on the first, singular term "perspective," irony can be seen to prepare dialectically for synecdoche, an ultimate, singular perspective that orders the diversity of perspectives under its gaze. But if stress is instead switched over to the second, plural term, then the result is metonymy, the relativity of disparate perspectives defeating the validity of any one of them (as Burke writes, "relativism is the constant temptation of dialectic").(121) There is perhaps a third option, suggested by the conspicuous overlap in Burke's definitions of both irony and metaphor (both similarly perspectival and based on transformational movement). This third approach would emphasize both terms in alternation, "perspective" and "perspectives," stressing the back-and-forth movement between the two, between the general and the specific, temporarily merging perspectives for the sake of unity only to then critically undermine unity through recognition of perspectival incongruity, preparing the way for a self that is also self-differing. Indeed, Burke seems to conceive of irony as a metaphoric approach to context: if metaphor is a single instance of perspectival association,

irony then associates a plurality of recognizably different perspectives, a shuttling between belief and skepticism. Herein lies what is probably the most glaring disagreement between Burke's logical system and White's archetypal narrative form: for Burke irony and metaphor exist in logical proximity, while for White they exist as chronological extremes.

Metaphor, in its nondiscerning creation of both continuities and incongruities, can perhaps be seen as the most neutral of the four tropes. In the end, it could be argued that metaphor achieves priority in Burke's thinking for reasons neither historical nor even logical (language, after all, is for Burke "basically" or "grammatically" synecdochic) but having more to do with rhetoric's proper context within a social world of partisanship and "wrangle"--that is, for political reasons. Metaphor, being the most neutral, may also be the most nonpartisan trope. Burke's more rhetorical and socially oriented view of literature in the end could never wholly line up behind the dictum laid down by Cleanth Brooks--that a poem is a "unification of attitudes into a hierarchy subordinated to a total and governing attitude."(122) Literature and politics were too intimately intwined, and Fascism still too pressing a threat, for Burke to propose such a "prematurely" synecdochic recipe for art. Rather, something closer to Burke's thinking was expressed by René d'Harnoncourt, who, in the February 1948 issue of Art News, phrased the relation of art and politics in terms of parts and wholes, and in so doing seemed to promote a metaphoric rather than synecdochic model, or, as Harnoncourt put it

> an order that reconciles freedom of the individual with the welfare of society and replaces yesterday's image of one unified civilization by a pattern in which many elements, while retaining their own individual qualities, join to form a new entity...a society

> enriched beyond belief by the full development of the individual for the sake of the whole.(123)

If synecdoche is Burke's linguistic ideal, it is nevertheless a static ideal, language in an ultimately lyric state, and even he strongly warned that the human drama should not yet be drawn to such a premature close. Metaphor instead pledges its allegiance to the active, to the full transformational resources of language; its movement participates in synecdochic orderings, dialectical or ironic interactions, and metonymic dissipations, yet it can't be reduced to any one of these. It is both a part of each and apart from each. To use White's terms, the flexibility of metaphor aligns it with the "syntactic," the source of language's health in action, as opposed to the hypotactics of synecdoche and the paratactics of metonymy.

Greenberg, not unlike Burke, also voiced his opposition to rhetorical extremism in art, to too much exclusive emphasis placed on either the metonymies of immediate sensation or the synecdoches of fanatical belief. American artists, he complained in 1947, "are less capable of detachment and irony than of almost anything else; therefore they are incapable of varying and extending themselves."(124) A decade later Johns's art would emerge before the public chock full of ironies; as Richard Shiff has described it, using terms reminiscent of both Burke and Greenberg, Johns's art "extend[s] perspectives" and in doing so "establishes no standard or non-deviant position from which to assess the degree of movement that occurs."(125) Greenberg would wait until 1962 to respond to Johns, and when he did, rather than praise the artist's irony for its expansiveness, he instead called it, of all things, "narrow" and "limited."(126) But, as we will see, by this time Greenberg had shifted his position, and had chosen to adopt a much more synecdochic view.

**NOTES**

1. Leo Steinberg, "Contemporary Art and the Plight of Its Public," in Gregory Battcock, ed., The New Art (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1973), 222.

2. Stephen Melville, "Notes on the Reemergence of Allegory, the Forgetting of Modernism, the Necessity of Rhetoric, and the Conditions of Publicity in Art and Criticism," October 19 (Winter 1981): 66.

3. Steinberg, "Contemporary Art," 205.

4. Most scholarly discussions of figurative tropes appeal to Aristotle's two works, Poetics and Rhetoric, and also remark on the overlap between the two, especially since metaphor is a topic taken up in both volumes. Moreover, it appears possible the two books were written simultaneously. "Neither work can be proved to precede the other--almost certainly both were revised and supplemented from time to time." Marsh H. McCall, Ancient Rhetorical Theories of Simile and Comparison, quoted in Jacques Derrida, "White Mythology: Metaphor in the Text of Philosophy," in Margins of Philosophy, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982), 232 n37. As for use of the terms in recent art historical work, the opposition between poetics and rhetoric structures Jacqueline Lichtenstein's analysis of French classical painting as well as, to a lesser extent, Mark Cheetham's analysis of early modern abstraction: see Jacqueline Lichtenstein, The Eloquence of Color: Rhetoric and Painting in the French Classical Age, trans. by Emily McVarish (Berkeley, Los Angeles, Oxford: University of California Press, 1993); and Mark A. Cheetham, The Rhetoric of Purity: Essentialist Theory and the Advent of Abstract Painting (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

5. Cleanth Brooks, The Well Wrought Urn (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1947), 179, 182.

6. Stanley Cavell, Must We Mean What We Say? (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 79.

7. Quoted in Bradford R. Collins, "Life Magazine and the Abstract Expressionists, 1948-51: A Historiographic Study of a Late Bohemian Enterprise," The Art Bulletin 73, no. 2 (June 1991): 303, fn. 112.

8. Hal Foster, "Postmodernism: A Preface," The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture, ed. Hal Foster (Port Townsend, Wash.: Bay Press, 1983), xv.

9. R. P. Blackmur, The Lion and the Honeycomb (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1955), 196, 179-80.

10. Hannah Arendt, "Introduction: Walter Benjamin: 1892-1940," in Walter Benjamin, Illuminations, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1968), 14.

11. Clement Greenberg, "The Crisis of the Easel Picture" (1948), in The Collected Essays and Criticism. Vol. 2: Arrogant Purpose, 1945-1949, ed. John O'Brian (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 224.

12. Michael Fried, "Art and Objecthood," Artforum 5, no. 10 (Summer 1967): 15, 20.

13. Cavell, Must We Mean What We Say?, 181.

14. ibid., 182.

15. Michael Fried, "Anthony Caro and Kenneth Noland: Some Notes on Not Composing," Lugano Review 1, nos. 3-4 (1965): 206.

16. Leo Steinberg, "Reflections on the State of Criticism," Artforum 10, no. 7 (March 1972): 43.

17. H. M. McLuhan, "Poetic vs. Rhetorical Exegesis: The Case for Leavis Against Richards and Empson," Sewanee Review 52 (1944): 268.

18. Mikhail Bakhtin, The Dialogic Imagination (Austin, Texas: The University of Texas Press, 1981), 276, 274.

19. Timothy J. Clark, "Jackson Pollock's Abstractions," in Reconstructing Modernism: Art in New York, Paris and Montreal, 1945-1964, ed. Serge Guilbaut (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990), 177.

20. Walter Gropius, "True Architectural Goals Yet to be Realized," Architectural Record 129, no. 7 (June 1961): 152.

21. ibid., 177.

22. Douglas Cooper quoted in Ann Gibson, "Abstract Expressionism's Evasion of Language," Art Journal 47, no. 3 (Fall 1988): 11; Robert M. Coates, "Art," The New Yorker (January 17, 1948): 57.

23. Coates, "Art": 57.

24. Parker Tyler, "Jackson Pollock: The Infinite Labyrinth," Magazine of Art 43, no. 3 (March 1950), reprinted in Pepe Karmel, ed., Jackson Pollock: Interviews, Articles, and Reviews (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1999), 66-67.

25. B. H. Friedman, "An Interview wth Lee Krasner Pollock," in Barbara Rose, ed., Pollock Painting (New York: Agrinde, 1980), n.p.

26. Mel Bochner, "Jackson Pollock," Arts Magazine 41, no. 7 (May 1967): 54.

27. Michael Fried, Three American Painters (Cambridge, Mass.: Fogg Art Museum, 1965), 14; Donald Judd, "Jackson Pollock" (1967), in Complete Writings 1959-1975 (Halifax: The Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 1975), 195; Greenberg quoted in Rosalind Krauss, The Optical Unconscious (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1993), 244.

28. Quoted in Emile de Antonio and Mitch Tuchman, Painters Painting (New York: Abbeville Press, 1984), 46-47, 101.

29. Clark, "Jackson Pollock's Abstractions," 201.

30. T. J. Clark, "Clement Greenberg's Theory of Art," in W. J. T. Mitchell, ed., The Politics of Interpretation (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1983), 218.

31. Theo van Doesburg, "Principles of Neo-Plastic Art," in Charles Harrison and Paul Wood, eds., Art in Theory: 1900-1990 (Oxford, England, and Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers, 1992), 281.

32. Clement Greenberg, "Avant-Garde and Kitsch" (1939), in The Collected Essays and Criticism. Vol. 1: Perceptions and Judgments, 1939-1944, ed. John O'Brian (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 6.

33. Clement Greenberg, "Poetry Continues: Review of New Poems: 1940, edited by Oscar Williams" (1941), ibid., 74.

34. Clement Greenberg, "The Missing Link: Review of An Essay on Man by Ernst Cassirer" (1945), in Collected Essays Vol. 2, 26.

35. Harold Rosenberg, "Everyman a Professional," in The Tradition of the New (New York: Horizon Press, 1959), 64-65.

36. This quote is from an unpublished essay, "The Agony of Painting." Clement Greenberg Papers, Getty Research Institute, Box 26, Folder 2.

37. Pierre Bourdieu, Language and Symbolic Power, ed. John B. Thompson, trans. Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991), 40.

38. Clement Greenberg, "Review of the Whitney Annual and the Exhibition Artists for Victory" (1943) and "Abstract Art" (1944), in Collected Essays Vol. 1, 134, 201, 203.

39. Quoted in Irving Sandler, The Triumph of American Painting (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), 12.

40. Mark Rothko, "The Romantics Were Prompted," reprinted in Herschel B. Chipp, ed., Theories of Modern Art (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1968), 548.

41. Noland quoted in Kenworth Moffett, Kenneth Noland (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1977), 39.

42. Morris quoted in Matthew Baigell, Artist and Identity in Twentieth-Century America (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 158.

43. Quoted in Paul Ricoeur, The Rule of Metaphor, trans. Robert Czerny (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1977), 6.

44. Kenneth Burke, A Grammar of Motives (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969), 503.

45. "The Varied Art of Four Pioneers," Life 47, no. 20 (November 16, 1959): 74-83.

46. Ad Reinhardt, "What is Corruption?" reprinted in Barbara Rose, ed., Art as Art: The Selected Writings of Ad Reinhardt (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991), 155. My thanks to Annika Marie for bringing this essay to my attention.

47. Dichter quoted in Karal Ann Marling, As Seen on TV: The Visual Culture of Everyday Life in the 1950s (Cambridge, Mass., and London: Harvard University Press), 84.

48. Greenberg, "Avant-Garde and Kitsch," 6. Emphasis added.

49. Harold Rosenberg, "Meaning and Communication," Poetry 47 (March 1936): 349.

50. Clement Greenberg, "Review of The Philosophy of Literary Forms: Studies in Symbolic Action by Kenneth Burke" (1941), in Collected Essays Vol. 1, 83. A few months before the review was published, a vacationing Greenberg wrote to his friend and fellow critic and writer Harold Lazarus, "I took Kenneth Burke's latest book up to write an attack on it for Partisan but after 100 pages I found myself applauding--except that his prose is so wretched. You ought to read it--carefully." See Greenberg, The Harold Letters, 244.

51. Bernard Karpel, Robert Motherwell and Ad Reinhardt, eds., Modern Artists in America, First Series (New York: Wittenborn Schultz, 1951), 27, 33.

52. ibid., 32.

53. ibid., 27, 33.

54. Kenneth Burke, A Rhetoric of Motives (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969), 38-39, 129. Emphasis added.

55. Hayden White, Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), 33. See also Margaret Brose and Hayden White, eds., Representing Kenneth Burke (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982), in which a variety of authors situate Burke's theories in the context of poststructuralism.

56. Burke, A Grammar of Motives, 507-08.

57. Quoted in Moffett, Kenneth Noland, 56; and in Philip Leider, "The Thing in Painting Is Color," New York Times (August 25, 1968): sec. 2, 21.

58. Burke, A Grammar of Motives, 509; Paul de Man, Allegories of Reading (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1979), 11.

59. Paul Cummings, Artists in Their Own Words (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1979), 146-47.

60. Motherwell quoted in Sandler, Triumph of American Painting, 30; Rothko quoted in Dore Ashton, About Rothko (New York: Da Capo Press, 1996), 103.

61. Cummings, Artists in Their Own Words, 140.

62. Fried, "Some Notes on Not Composing": 206.

63. Irving Hershel Sandler, "New York Letter," Art International 4, no. 9 (December 1, 1960): 25.

64. Hilton Kramer, "The Season Surveyed," Art in America 52, no. 3 (June 1964): 110-12.

65. Mel Bochner, "Art in Process--Structures," Arts Magazine 40, no. 9 (September-October 1966): 38.

66. Fried, "Some Notes on Not Composing": 206.

67. Donald Judd, "Lee Bontecou" (1965), in Complete Writings, 178-79.

68. Quoted in John Coplans, Don Judd (Pasadena, Calf.: Pasadena Museum of Art, 1971), 36.

69. Lucy R. Lippard, "Reviews," Artforum 2, no. 9 (March 1964): 19.

70. Fried, "Art and Objecthood": 16.

71. White, Metahistory, 37.

72. Susan Sontag, Against Interpretation and Other Essays (New York: Noonday Press, 1966), 10.

73. Fred Orton, Figuring Jasper Johns (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994), 73.

74. Clement Greenberg, "After Abstract Expressionism" (1962), in The Collected Essays and Criticism. Vol. 4: Modernism with a Vengeance, 1957-1969, ed. John O'Brian (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 126-27.

75. In an influential 1981 essay titled "Last Exit: Painting," Thomas Lawson took the work of David Salle as exemplary of the postmodernist return to painting and representation, seeing it as posed against metaphor and in line with irony. "The images are laid next to one another. These juxtapositions prime us to understand the work metaphorically, as does the diptych format Salle favors, but in the end the metaphors refuse to jell. Meaning is intimated but tantalizingly withheld. It appears to be on the surface, but as soon as it is approached it disappears, provoking the viewer into a deeper examination of prejudices bound inextricably with the conventional representations that express them. ...Salle follows a strategy of infiltration and sabotage, using established conventions against themselves in the hope of exposing cultural repression." Lawson's description here is nearly identical to what Hal Foster would call postmodernism's "new strategy of interference" two years later. But Lawson goes on to warn against the danger risked by an approach, namely the temptation of art to fall into an already culturally accepted and too comfortable ironic mode. "We are living in an age of skepticism and as a result the practice of art is inevitably crippled by the suspension of belief... One of the most troubling results of the co-optation of modernism by mainstream bourgeois culture is that to a certain degree irony has also been subsumed. A vaguely ironic, slightly sarcastic response to the world has now become a clichéd, unthinking one. From being a method that could shatter conventional ideas, it has become a convention for establishing complicity. From being a way of coming to terms with lack of faith, it has become a screen for bad faith. In this latter sense popular movies and television are ironic, newscasters are ironic, Julian Schnabel is ironic. Which is to say that irony is no longer easily identified as a liberating mode, but is at times a repressive one." Thomas Lawson, "Last Exit: Painting," reprinted in Brian Wallis, ed., Art After Modernism: Rethinking Representation (New York: The New Museum of Contemporary Art, 1984), 159-60, 164.

76. Rosalind Krauss, "Pictorial Space and the Question of Documentary," Artforum 10, no. 3 (November 1971): 69.

77. Gerard Genette, Figures of Literary Discourse, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 119.

78. Rather than reducing rhetoric to linguistics, Stephen Melville writes that, "whatever Jakobson's explicit motives, the effect of his shift in terminology is to render language in its entirety rhetorical." Stephen Melville, "Metonymy," in Michael Kelly, ed., Encyclopedia of Aesthetics, Vol. 2 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 225.

79. Thomas Crow, "Versions of the Pastoral in Some Recent American Art," in David A. Ross and Jürgen Harten, eds., The Binational: American Art of the Late Eighties (Boston: Institute of Contemporary Art and Museum of Fine Arts; Cologne: DuMont Buchverlag, 1988), 21.

80. Fried, Three American Painters, 46.

81. de Man, Allegories of Reading, 9-10.

82. ibid. "I would not hesitate," de Man's passage concludes, "to equate the rhetorical, figural potentiality of language with literature itself." This important essay, titled "Semiology and Rhetoric," also includes approving remarks by de Man on Kenneth Burke. Over the past decade there has emerged a growing interest in rhetorical analysis among social art historians. Fred Orton's book on Jasper Johns is one instance. On the College Art Association session T. J. Clark chaired titled "A de Manian Art History?" see Christopher S. Wood, "Paul de Man and Art History," Flash Art 28, no. 183 (Summer 1995): 88-90. For a very different approach, see Norman Bryson's discussion of oration and tropes in Vision and Painting: The Logic of the Gaze (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), chapter five, and Tradition and Desire: from David to Delacroix (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

83. Ricoeur, The Rule of Metaphor, 56-7.

84. Genette, Figures of Literary Discourse, 108-09. The rhetorical analysis Fred Orton performs in Figuring Jasper Johns suffers precisely from his collapsing of metonymy and synecdoche, his treating them as basically synonymous. What's left is the metaphor versus metonymy opposition, in which metaphor is stripped of its particularity--its ability to stress both difference and sameness between the entities it associates--and made into a trope of sameness only, identification without remainder. According to Orton, metaphor "suggests a yet higher stage in the totalizing process, a moment of consummate or hypostatic union when the very difference between inward and outward realms would at last fall away" (Orton, Figuring Jasper Johns, 11). This, as I've shown, is not metaphor but synecdoche. In Orton's hands, metaphor and metonymy simply stand for (modernist) belief and

(postmodernist) skepticism respectively: "Metaphor and the idea of metaphor appeal to the 'aesthetically responsive' rather than the 'rhetorically aware' critic and historian" (ibid.).

85. Philip Leider, "Literalism and Abstraction: Frank Stella's Retrospective at the Modern," Artforum 8, no. 8 (April 1970): 47.

86. Donald Judd, "Statement" (1968) and "Nationwide Reports: Hartford. Black, White and Gray" (1964), in Complete Writings, 196, 117.

87. Clement Greenberg, "Henri Rousseau and Modern Art" (1946) and "The Present Prospects of American Painting and Sculpture" (1947), in Collected Essays Vol. 2, 94, 164.

88. Greenberg, "Henri Rousseau and Modern Art," 94-95; Donald Judd, "Statement" (1965), in Complete Writings, 181.

89. Donald Judd, "Reviews and Previews" (1959) and "Specific Objects" (1965), in Complete Writings, 5, 187.

90. Clement Greenberg, "Modernist Painting" (1960) and "After Abstract Expressionism," in Collected Essays Vol. 4, 92, 131. For an example of Greenberg's theory interpreted metonymically as an "ontological reduction," see Yve-Alain Bois, Painting as Model (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990), especially 123-55. For a different, more synecdochal reading of Greenberg's theory (at least in its later phases) see Rosalind E. Krauss, "The Crisis of the Easel Picture," in Kirk Varnedoe and Pepe Karmel, eds., Jackson Pollock: New Approaches (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1999). Krauss focuses on Greenberg's notion of "opticality," claiming that it "dislodges the idea of the medium from a set of physical conditions and relocates it within a phenomenological mode of address that can itself function as the support for the medium"(169).

91. Michael Fried, "Shape as Form," Artforum 5, no. 3 (November 1966): 18.

92. Fried, "Art and Objecthood": 15.

93. Clement Greenberg, "The Wellsprings of Modern Art: Review of Modern Painters by Lionello Venturi" (1947), in Collected Essays Vol. 2, 176.

94. Fried, Three American Painters, 21.

95. Donald Judd, "Barnett Newman" (1970), in Complete Writings, 202.

96. ibid.

97. Donald Judd, "Local History" (1964), in Complete Writings, 151. Judd repeats much the same idea--that "a lot of things look alike, but they're not necessarily very much alike"--in Bruce Glaser, "Questions to Stella and Judd," Minimal Art: A Critical Anthology, ed. Gregory Battcock (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1968).

98. Clement Greenberg, "The Later Monet" (1957), in Collected Essays Vol. 4, 11.

99. Richard Shiff, "Breath of Modernism (Metonymic Drift)," in Terry Smith, ed., In Visible Touch: Modernism and Masculinity (Sydney: Power Publications, 1997), 185.

100. Clement Greenberg, "Review of Camille Pissarro: Letters to His Son Lucien, edited by John Rewald" (1944), in Collected Essays Vol. 1, 216.

101. Quoted in "Questions to Stella and Judd," 156.

102. Judd, "Specific Objects" (1965), in Complete Writings, 184.

103. "Questions to Stella and Judd," 155-56.

104. Mel Bochner, "Primary Structures," Arts Magazine 40, no. 7 (June 1966): 34.

105. Irving Hershel Sandler, "New York Letter," Quadrum 14 (1963): 117.

106. Brian O'Doherty, "Minus Plato," in Battcock, ed., Minimal Art (as in note 97), 253. It was during the late '50s that Alain Robbe-Grillet's writings began to be popularized in the United States; between 1958-64 five of his novels were translated by Richard Howard and published by New York's Grove Press: The Voyeur (1958), Jealousy (1959), In the Labyrinth (1960), Last Year at Marienbad (1962), and The Erasers (1964). At the same time, a series of translated critical essays by Robbe-Grillet, as well as appreciations of his work by other authors, appeared in the influential Evergreen Review. The very first of these--Robbe-Grillet's "A Fresh Start for Fiction"--was published in the journal's third issue (1957) alongside a special section devoted to Jackson Pollock, which included Hans Namuth photographs of Pollock (one of which was featured on the issue's cover) and a reprint of a short essay by Clement Greenberg. See also Roland Barthes, "Alain Robbe-Grillet," Evergreen Review 2, no. 5 (Summer 1958): 113-126; Alain Robbe-Grillet, "Old 'Values' and the New Novel," Evergreen Review 3, no. 9 (Summer 1959): 98-118; and Bruce Morrissette, "New Structure in the Novel: Jealousy, by Alain Robbe-Grillet," Evergreen Review 3, no. 10 (November-December 1959): 103-07, 164-90. For an appraisal printed elsewhere, see J. C. Weightman, "Robbe-Grillet," Encounter 18, no. 3 (March 1962): 30-40.

Finally, in 1965 English-language versions of many of Robbe-Grillet's critical essays were collected in For a New Novel, trans. by Richard Howard (New York: Grove Press, 1965).

107. Steinberg, "Contemporary Art" (as in note 1), 221.

108. Hayden White, Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), 22.

109. De Man, Allegories of Reading, especially 11-19. The opposition between cognitive and performative is also used in Paul de Man, "Phenomenality and Materiality in Kant," in Aesthetic Ideology (Minneapolis, Minn.: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 70-90. In this essay, de Man sets out to specifically deconstruct the synecdoche at the heart of Kant's aesthetic. "'The whole,' says Kant, 'is articulated and not just piled on top of each other; it can grow from the inside out but not from the outside in. It grows like an animal body, not by the addition of new limbs but, without changing the proportions, by making each individual member stronger and more efficient for its own purpose" (88).

110. White, Tropics of Discourse, 5-6. The difference between Burke and White is exacerbated by the historical lag separating the two: White the historian, writing during the '70s when post-structuralism and semiotics were on the rise throughout academia, demonizes literary criticism as "imperialist" (ibid., 261). Conversely, Burke the literary critic bemoans the historicist approach that dominated literary studies just preceding his own time (Burke, A Rhetoric of Motives, 28).

111. Kenneth Burke, Philosophy of Literary Form: Studies in Symbolic Action (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973), 26.

112. Bourdieu, Language and Symbolic Power (as in note 37), 40.

113. Kenneth Burke, Attitudes Toward History (Los Altos, Calf.: Hermes Publications, 1959), 309.

114. Burke, A Grammar of Motives, 509.

115. ibid., 324.

116. Burke, A Rhetoric of Motives, 332.

117. Burke, A Grammar of Motives, 442.

118. Clement Greenberg, "Mr. Eliot and Notions of Culture" (1944), in Collected Essays Vol. 1, 219-20.

119. White, Metahistory, 38.

120. Burke, A Rhetoric of Motives, 187.

121. Burke, A Grammar of Motives, 513.

122. Brooks, The Well Wrought Urn (as in note 5), 189.

123. Quoted in Serge Guilbaut, How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 189.

124. Greenberg, "Present Prospects," 165. Emphasis added.

125. Richard Shiff, "Anamorphosis: Jasper Johns," Foirades/Fizzles: Echo and Allusion in the Art of Jasper Johns (Los Angeles: The Grunwald Center for the Graphic Arts, Wight Art Gallery, University of California, Los Angeles, 1987), 147-55. Emphasis added.

126. Greenberg, "After Abstract Expressionism," 127.

## CHAPTER THREE:
## MODERNIST PAINTING AND ITS SCENE OF RECEPTION

There has been a breakdown of cultural authority. Socially and culturally unified in former times, the art public since the 19th century has been expanded to receive a middle class that becomes less and less willing to abide by the judgment of connoisseurs. People are no longer so ashamed as they used to be of bad taste; rather, without going to the trouble to improve it, they now defend it aggressively.

--Clement Greenberg, 1949(1)

There is a great deal of intention in painting; it's rather unavoidable. But when a work is let out by the artist and said to be complete, the intention loosens. Then it's subject to all kinds of uses and misuse and pun.... Meaning is determined by the use of the thing, the way an audience uses a painting once it is put in public.

--Jasper Johns, 1964(2)

Functions of Criticism

The hostility with which fellow critics initially greeted Kenneth Burke's writings converged on one point. Almost unanimously they faulted Burke for being too much a rhetorician. "Burke must have found it his first cradle-word," was Blackmur's verdict. "In Mr. Burke rhetoric always does all the work, and in order to do so it has to...become very abstract--so abstract that Kant's categories become immediate sensations; and with its abstractness it also has to become neutral."(3) If nothing else Burke's writing demonstrated a rage for system, elaborating a clockwork of labels and their relative specifications and coordination, their valences and functions. Thus, despite his distrust of science and its literal-minded metonymies, his work was routinely excoriated precisely for being too scientistic. "There is nothing to arrest him: there are no obstacles," Blackmur continued. "The articulate organization has absorbed the material organized." Greenberg agreed: "Instead of discussing the processes by which we think about works of literature," he wrote, Burke "discusses the terminology of these processes.... It is all superstructural.... He has a weakness for that awful pseudo-scientific jargon that has become familiar to us from the activities of progressive educators, psychologists and efficiency experts."(4)

Burke's system may have been labyrinthian in its complexity, but its primary concern seemed to be with its own internal coherence, making the turns and operations of its logic appear inexorable and mechanistic. This foreshadowed what mid-century critics almost across the board saw as the danger looming over modern civilization--that quantification and calculation were generally displacing sensibility and cultivation of the soul. Or, as F. R. Leavis put it, "the efficiency of the machinery becomes the ultimate value, and this seems to us to mean something very different from expanding and richer human life."(5)

The argument here, pitting literature and art against science for the responsibility of stewarding the new industrial, democratic age, has a long, storied history. Matthew Arnold and T. H. Huxley squared off over it in the 1880s, and in the 1950s it was taken up anew in C. P. Snow's book The Two Cultures and in Leavis's ferocious attack on Snow's pro-science position.(6) More generally, an antagonism between scientific rationality and aesthetic intuition was said to have effected a division not just within the culture but within the modern subject itself, creating what T. S. Eliot famously called "a dissociation of sensibility." Writing in The Art Bulletin in 1943, John Alford quoted from A. N. Whitehead's Science and the Modern World that "between 1500 and 1900 'the world had got hold of a general idea it could neither live with nor live without,' the idea, that is, of the universal validity of mechanistic principles."(7) The result, according to John Crowe Ransom, was that "we do not know how to feel a thought."(8) In 1950 Greenberg took issue with Eliot's diagnosis that "in the seventeenth century a dissociation of sensibility set in from which we have never recovered" only in that the onset of the disaster should actually be dated a little earlier, having already been well established by the time of its institutionalization with "Descartes' claim that the subject receives his surest guarantee that he exists from the presence of his own thought."

> Thought [Greenberg continued] becomes the prima facie evidence of truth and throws out of court whatever is reported by direct perception or intuition or affect without being manipulated by "the categories of understanding." The truth is not what is felt but what works and is consistent with itself. The result is a split in consciousness, between the conative and cognitive, the subjective and the objective. In the end we fall prey to a kind of collective schizophrenia. This schizophrenia is part of the discomfort of our

> civilization. It is painful to be unable to assent to the data of immediate awareness and to be compelled to act only upon that which is derived from the operations upon experience of "objective," detached reason. How intense by comparison is the comfort of believing what we feel. And how richer seeming.(9)

The idea that not only the culture but each and every individual within it falls victim to a war between the intuited and the ratiocinated, that modern feeling cowers and mutters under the heavy censorship of the "categories of understanding," that industrialism's demand for practicality and functionalism has all but eclipsed the instinct for beauty--all this no doubt exacerbated greatly the perceived opposition between poetry and rhetoric.

"Culture means cultivation," Greenberg wrote, echoing Leavis.(10) In this macro-micro equation, the individually refined sensibility is made to stand as a synecdochic part representing the whole of the society's culture. By the same token, the culture itself is rendered as a mirror image of the well-rounded, whole individual. Furthermore, as a mirror of the individual, the culture gains the dimension of depth: rather than a set of functional material practices and interlocking group transactions, culture modeled on the individual acquires an interiority, and hence a morality, a sense of "center" that must "hold"--culture doesn't just proceed routinely or change genealogically but matures, refines and perfects. "When a poet's mind is perfectly equipped for its work," Eliot wrote, "it is constantly amalgamating disparate experiences. [T]he ordinary man's experience is chaotic, irregular, fragmentary...[he] falls in love, or reads Spinoza, and these two experiences have nothing to do with each other, or with the noise of the typewriter or the smell of cooking; in the mind of the poet these experiences are always forming new wholes."(11) The individual, especially if he or she is a poet or artist, or at least attuned to poetry and art, is always greater than--

not just the sum of--the parts; and what is greater is precisely wholeness itself, its unity, comprehension, fluency and integrity, which are hence made supreme values--values for both poems and persons. "It is not the 'greatness,' the intensity, of the emotions, the components," Eliot argues, "but the intensity of the artistic process, the pressure, so to speak, under which the fusion takes place, that counts."(12)

The reciprocity between the individual, cultivated sensibility, which fuses piecemeal experiences into always greater wholes, and the unified, well integrated artwork is such that each can be seen as simultaneously producing and being produced by the other. In encounters with works of art the individual opens him or herself to the experience and in turn opens the work to sensitive, probing judgment--this would be such an occasion when pressure is applied to fuse parts into wholes, creating fluent interchange between the specific instance of perception and the criteria and standards generalized over time by the perceiving subject. Especially for the critic: ascertaining the relative value of an artwork in the felt experience of it is as close as criticism gets to the poetic. This, it turns out, is precisely what the rhetorician is said to be incapable of or unwilling to do. According to the young Marshall McLuhan, a critic like Burke, as he appropriates and breaks down artworks in his analytical wheelhouse, can't say whether the work's constitutive parts "are aggregated, excogitated or genuinely fused in a unifying vision which makes of them a dramatic integrity."(13) In its spread of flat and functional categories, Burke's system is like a machine, an ensemble of operational terms lacking interiority and depth, a set of exteriorities clanking against each other like dominoes, one thing after another.

Critics in the mold of Eliot and Leavis complained about people like Burke (and also Northrup Frye) for devising critical systems that could dissect equally well a Joyce novel and a newspaper headline without saying anything about

the relative "human" merits of the two. Even Harold Rosenberg wrote early on of Burke that "there is almost no point in his theory...which could not be shown to touch equally upon Oedipus and a Broadway hit."(14) The distinction made here--between criticism as the judgment of quality and criticism as the application of a technical and "neutral" methodology--hews closely to the difference between modernism and postmodernism as characterized by advocates of the latter such as Rosalind Krauss, who used precisely such terms in the introduction to her 1986 Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths. The interest of postmodernist criticism, Krauss argues, lies not in a search for quality but "almost entirely in its method."(15) Inside this long history is a story of criticism's professionalization and absorption into academia: certainly the shared subtext to Frye's and Krauss's arguments is the securing for criticism of a more rigorous method and hence greater respect within the university. But the shift of focus from "quality" to "method" also marks a shift in criticism's fundamental basis, from being rooted in a certain historicist notion of the subject to being rooted in a certain structuralist notion of signification. For Leavis and Greenberg, culture meant cultivation, the development of the faculties, passage from intuition to understanding, balance between feeling and thought. The threat to this developing body, whether the culture's or the individual's, is discontinuity, the splintering, stunting and decentering brought on by too much specialization and the collapse of any over-arching belief system, any fused whole. Hence all the handwringing over "the two cultures" and "dissociated" sensibility (or think again of the line that starts "Avant-Garde and Kitsch," that no perspective is large enough to relate a poem by Eliot and a poem by Eddie Guest). To snap sensibility back into alert unison, one exercised judgment. Postmodernists like Krauss, who borrow from structuralist anthropology a view of culture as a system of binary terms, see an exactly opposite threat. They stress not modern society's fragmentation but its

compensatory other side, its overly enforced unification: for them, the worst that could happen is that culture becomes too congealed, implacable, unassailable, that there exists no loose joints in the meaning system, no slippage between signifiers and ideological signifieds. To sow fissures in such a system, one exercises ideology critique. Disunity threatens modernism, whereas unity is the threat perceived by postmodernism. Thus it only makes sense that modernists place emphasis on the integrity and wholeness of the poetic, whereas postmodernists seek to upset the smooth functioning of cultural rhetoric (through a "strategy of interference," to borrow Hal Foster's phrase).

## Parts and Wholes

To repeat, modern society builds and maintains itself on both fragmentation and unification at once--the two working as mutually interdependent and ongoing processes. "The professional mass keeps expanding," Harold Rosenberg wrote in Art News in 1956, "and as it expands it divides."(16) Moreover, these two processes operate at both the level of the culture and that of the individual. As professions proliferate, the culture breaks up into increasingly smaller and numerous groups, with such groups admitting only those individuals who conform by becoming specialists themselves. This, in turn, breaks up the wholeness of the well-rounded individual subject. "In surrendering the totality of oneself to a professional role," Greenberg lamented, "you give up being a friend, a lover, a gossip, an attractive person, the life of the party, in order to be that much more poet, actor, boxer, doctor, businessman. Instead of completing yourself by work you mutilate yourself."(17)

The modern professional is not a whole but only ever a part of some larger ensemble or scheme beyond his or her comprehension. The slight ambiguity in the title of Rosenberg's 1956 essay, "Everyman a Professional,"

encapsulates the problem. Such individuals have no internal center to which they add new experiences; they do not submit experience to a centripetal and internalizing pressure so much as are themselves submitted to pressures from outside; the professional only finds a sense of wholeness and center in the abstraction that a highly administered, bureaucratic society presents itself as. The result is typically "a man the epidermis of whose brain functions better than its core," as Greenberg sarcastically put it, "a man highly sensitive as only the superficial can be to the changing moods of the international, up-to-date, and literate milieu in which he circulates and according to which he cuts his figure.... The task of such a talent is...to post us on the appropriate reactions of the day."(18)

Concerned primarily not with an individual reality, a private core that judges and amalgamates experience, but with how to fit into a surrounding social apparatus and competently circulate its signs, such a subject is encouraged to develop an exterior rhetoric, a surface look--agreeable manner, aptitude to get along--at the expense of a poetic interior. Various names were coined for this new modern individual: Erich Fromme's term was "the marketer," C. Wright Mills's "the fixer." In his 1950 book The Lonely Crowd, David Riesman described the type as "other-directed," as opposed to the "inner-directed" personality common to an earlier entrepreneurial age and, before that, the "tradition-directed" character of the old aristocracy and rural clan. According to Riesman, as society becomes more administered and bureaucratic, and the basis of the economy shifts from extraction and production to communication and services, "other people [become] the problem, not the material environment."(19) The other-directed personality is worried "not so much about violation of inner standards as about failure to be popular." The same year that Rosenberg wrote "Everyman a Professional," Greenberg used much the same language to describe the modern "American personality," which he found to be "a standardized one":

> Without a standardized personality, we doubtless would not manifest that 'unity and diversity' which is frequently remarked upon...without it we probably would not get along with one another as well as we do, given our ethnic, racial and regional heterogeneity.... A personality, ostensibly declaring the whole of oneself, leaves too little of the self over for self-cultivation or self-development.... Americans exhaust their selves in their personalities.... We do in this country behave as though intent on Hegel's millennium, when the public and the private shall be as one, and the outside of a man declare everything about his inside.(20)

Exactly how inside and outside, part and whole, relate to each other--whether a synecdochic transparency obtains between the two, or interiority and individuality are to be liquidated for the sake of surface exterior and the mass--is what worried commentators. Riesman described the newly dominant other-directed type as immanently malleable and chameleon, susceptible to systematic yet intimate suggestion, influence and programming: "Keeping in touch with others permits a close behavioral conformity, not through drill in behavior itself, as in the tradition-directed character, but rather through an exceptional sensitivity to the actions and wishes of others." And these others weren't confined to family and community but included mostly the disembodied apparitions of the media. Indeed, the new service economy ushered in a world of such rhetorical "others." As Riesman tells it,

> Education, leisure, services, these go together with an increased consumption of words and images from the new mass media.... Increasingly, relations with the outer world and with the self are mediated by the flow of mass communication...experienced through a screen of words by which the events are habitually atomized and

> personalized--or psuedo-personalized. For the inner-directed person who remains still extant in this period the tendency is rather to systematize and moralize this flow of words.... What is common to all the other-directed people is that their contemporaries are the source of direction for the individual--either those known to him or those with whom he is indirectly acquainted, through friends and through the mass media.(21)

It was a common complaint by the late '50s that citizens were growing too conformist, becoming too easily swayed by external forces. John Kenneth Galbraith (in the early '40s the editor of Henry Luce's Fortune) lamented in 1958 that "these are the days when men of all social disciplines and all political faiths seek the comfortable and accepted; when the man of controversy is looked upon as a disturbing influence; when originality is taken to be a mark of instability; and when...the bland lead the bland."(22) Furthermore, the external forces that most swayed individuals were themselves impersonal, large-scale and industrial--mass education, governmental social engineering schemes, public relations, advertising. Urban centers were where other-directed types congregated; according to Riesman, "The other director person is cosmopolitan." Three years earlier Greenberg had also used the word "cosmopolitan" when describing the industrialization of culture: "America, in two or three big cities, is being rapidly divested of its provincialism, but the cosmopolitanism replacing it is the product of a leveling out and rationalization of culture, which we now import or imitate the way we do French wines and British cloth."(23) Harold Rosenberg argued that the labor and techniques of sowing conformism and gluing together the atomized professions had itself become a profession, or rather a kind of meta-profession. "Popularization, which acts as journalistic or educational intercessor between the isolated mind of the theorist-technician and the fragmented

psyche of the public, is the most powerful profession of our time and gaining daily in numbers, importance and finesse."(24) The industries of mass communication did not together make a whole; they were instead only more professions, just doing their jobs. Nevertheless they took over the work of amalgamating otherwise disparate experiences, providing the connections between, say, the theories of Spinoza and the smell of cooking, a task individual professionals no longer had the time or even capacity to do on their own. A well-rounded life now arrived prepackaged through various media and commercial outlets, something to consume as a finished product like any other commodity. "The cultured American," Greenberg sighed, "has become more knowing than cultivated, glib in a kind of fashionable koine but without eccentricity or the distortions of personal bias, a compendium of what he or (more usually) she reads in certain knowing magazines--anxious to be right, correct au courant, rather than happy and wise."(25)

If it was now up to the various sectors of the mass communications apparatus to unify society's otherwise dispersed shards, to effect what would at least be a functional surrogate for a common culture, that task could not possibly be performed poetically. Itself built under the dictates of calculation, rationalization and efficiency, mass media could not "genuinely fuse" parts into wholes; it was as bereft of an interiority as the mass audience in whose image it was conceived. As Greenberg noted, "Only the enormous productivity of American industrialism could lead any society to think it possible to cultivate the masses."(26) Mass education and mass communication were outfitted for quantity, not quality: they could not discriminate, could not judge, neither in terms of their contents nor their audience members ("a million people may file past a painting in a museum: they do not in the least reduce its power or beauty," Alvin Toeffler crowed in 1964, a year after it was announced that museum attendance had surpassed that of major league baseball).(27) Like any other industrial process, such a

system aimed to reduce friction and increase results by averaging everything out, exploiting the common denominator. "Midcult" is what Dwight McDonald famously called it--neither low nor high culture, serious or superficial, but somehow blandly both. McDonald pointed to Luce's Life magazine as an example:

> Life is a typical homogenized magazine, appearing on the mahogany library tables of the rich, the glass cocktail tables of the middle class, and the oilcloth kitchen tables of the poor. Its contents are as thoroughly homogenized as its circulation. The same issue will present a serious exposition of atomic energy followed by a disquisition on Rita Hayworth's love life...nine color pages of Renoir paintings followed by a picture of a roller-skating horse.... Somehow these scramblings together seem to work all one way, degrading the serious rather than elevating the frivolous...just think, nine pages of Renoirs! But that roller-skating horse comes along, and the final impression is that both Renoir and the horse were talented.(28)

The serious is degraded precisely because it is not fused through judgment into a greater whole, rather only jumbled with other parts that remain only ever parts, disconnected and distracting. Midcult most worried people like McDonald and Greenberg because, by collapsing the divide between high and low, it propagated nondiscrimination, an abdicating of judgment. Here the sum is always less than the whole. Moreover, the very notion of cultivation no longer had to do with developing the individual's poetic sensibility but was made "other-directed," a means for people to fit into a social order, or to effect the appearance of moving upward within it. Cultivation was now the concern of salesmen, polltakers and status-seekers, an industry with expanding markets and growing demand, a prime indicator of relative status in an anxiously competitive society. "The bitter

status struggle that goes on in a thoroughly democratic country," Greenberg continued, "would itself have served by now to put self-cultivation on the order of day--once it became clear to the commonalty, as it has by now, that cultivation not only makes life more interesting but...defines social position."(29) Cultivation was used as means to impress others, a show to put on, a rhetoric.

This made a mockery of the socialist ideal of culture as Greenberg and others had earlier envisioned it. "One of the aims of culture is to transform the private into the public," Greenberg had explained. But such a culture privileges the public not in spite of the private; rather, the public is nothing more than an extension and elaboration of the private, an overflowing of individual cultivation beyond the private, its full flowering, with the integrity of the individual and its poetics serving as society's very foundation. Here the poetic pulses back and forth equally between parts and wholes, communicating between the inner and outer, the one and the many, the specific and the general. Rhetoric is subsumed and redeemed in the process. "Culture enables individuals to communicate and appreciate inwardness," Greenberg continued, "and make it objective." Thus the public becomes predicated on the private. Mass bureaucratic society is the exact opposite; here people depend on each other like cogs in a machine; the individual disappears into the social not to enlarge and transcend him or herself but to forfeit the interiority of the self; unification is achieved through a metonymic reduction of the individual to society. "Failure of individuals to express inwardness," Greenberg warned, "converts them into a mass." The result of such a reduction is that "we as the most rationalized human products of industrialism come closest to the insect kingdom--too much at the disposal of our trades not to maintain enough the claims of what only seems extraneous."(30)

It would seem that, given society's antagonism toward the poetic, it would be left all the more to each and every

individual to exert and cultivate individuality per se. "Expressing inwardness" took on the force of a political crusade: in 1949 McLuhan charged corporate media giants like Luce of "taking political initiative" and mandating other-directedness by "vigorously thrusting an emotionally-charged spectator role" on his magazines' readers. McLuhan called for a revolt in the form of "the untrancing of millions of individuals by millions of individual acts of the will."(31) That individual center, that single point of view that brings into alignment thought and feeling, faculties and sense, that "genuinely fuses" what one undergoes and what one understands--that inward core would have to be all the more exercised and externalized if total massification was to be forestalled. To do so meant exerting equal effort in the opposite direction; it meant withstanding pressure to conform to social codes and behavioral disciplines that, if internalized, would corrupt and atrophy genuine inwardness. Even Greenberg at times seemed to cheer painters to "just paint," just express themselves: in a mostly positive review from 1944, for example, he warned Robert Motherwell to "stop watching himself, let him stop thinking instead of painting himself through."(32)

But here a new problem arose. If expressing inwardness was privileged exclusively, then what would keep such expressions from themselves separating out as fitful and disconnected fragments? It wasn't enough to respond to the widening gap between fragmentation and unification by siding with just individuals in their state of deprivation and ignoring as best as possible the bureaucratized whole. Nor would modern dissociation be cured by simply extolling feeling to the exclusion of thought, or practice minus theory. That would only exacerbate dissociation and produce more disparate parts, spontaneous blurtings without any larger comprehension, any fuller, more general sense of the poetic that transcended mere specific instances. This is what opponents of much '50s art complained about, that, in the words of Robert Brustein, "in these 'action' paintings we are

confronted with the painter's dreams before he has reflected on them, sometimes before he even knows what they are...it is often difficult to distinguish between self-expression and self-indulgence."(33) For younger artists and critics of the '60s this became a standard charge; Barbara Rose, for instance, casually dismissed the "inept art that resulted from the elevation of mindless 'action' over self-conscious and critical deliberation."(34) Even Kenneth Burke, participating on the roundtable for Modern Artists in America, had to insist to his colleagues that the artist was more than a wellspring of unfiltered expression. "What of an artist who revises his work?," Burke asked. "Is he not criticizing himself? ...A critical function is integral to the creative act."(35)

Greenberg went back and forth, if only because in the end he wanted an art at once felt and thought. On the one hand, as his ambivalence over Pollock demonstrated, he admitted that it required an almost complete obliviousness regarding socially prevailing taste for an artist to achieve anything truly original and vital. In 1956, he applauded David Smith for eluding the problem of self-consciousness that Motherwell had symptomized 12 years earlier. "Smith... can afford bad taste and an incapacity for self-criticism.... The inability or unwillingness to criticize himself...enables him to accept the surprises of his own personality, wherein lies his originality. Which is to say that he has been triumphantly loyal to his own temperament and his own experience in defiance of whatever precedents or rules of taste might have stood in the way."(36) At the same time, Greenberg was cautious not to overestimate what such presumed immediacy could purchase. He dreaded the myth of the wild artist and of painting as action, and bristled at attempts by painters to escape into nature or esoterica and thus avoid reckoning with prickly realities such as urban industrialism or even painting's historical grounding and limits. "An artist working in New York or Paris still cannot introduce Oriental, archaic, or barbaric elements into his work without

modifying them radically to fit the terms of easel painting as established by a tradition that goes back to the Middle Ages and is not yet dead," he protested in 1948. "The greater the artist's awareness of those terms, the greater is his power of self-criticism.... The failure of self-criticism...accounts for some of the most serious shortcomings of contemporary advanced American art as a whole."(37)

Greenberg, who often appealed to Kant in his writings and conversation, made clear he subscribed to the definition of taste as the exercising of judgment and not as a mere pleasurable sensing. He wanted both immediacy and reflection, unfettered expression and self-criticism. Indeed, this was the problem he had with the debate surrounding Eliot's notion of dissociated sensibility: Greenberg thought that Eliot's own prescribed cure, a return to religion, put too much emphasis on synecdochic immediacy and denied the importance of ironic detachment. As early as "Avant-Garde and Kitsch," Greenberg had warned of the seductions of immediacy; with avant-garde art "values...are derived at a second remove, as the result of reflection upon the immediate impression left by the plastic values," whereas kitsch asks that there be "no discontinuity between art and life...identifications are self-evident immediately and without any effort on the part of the spectator."(38) In response to Eliot, Greenberg wrote that "Romanticism and all the revivals of religion and religiosity since the 18th century are attempts to restore the validity of the data of feeling." But while he sympathized with those who desired immediacy, desired "the comfort of believing what we feel," it was precisely irony, he felt, that "remains literary art's last defense against the disassociation of sensibility. And woe to the poet who lets this irony lapse."(39)

Only an ironic viewpoint, it seemed--or, to borrow Burke's phrase, "a perspective of perspectives"--had a chance of forging an albeit provisional whole out of the piecemeal and disparate experiences offered up by the world as it

exists; religion solved the problem by avoiding reality in favor of a patinaed fantasy. Time and again Greenberg advocated an engagement with life's harsh realities that was at once passionate and skeptical, detached in the sense not of being aloof or withdrawn but of being sober, unswayed by illusions. Detachment for Greenberg was bound up with his praise for empiricism and positivism; it meant brutal honesty and openness, unblinking assessment, willingness to face truths straight-on, resistance to narrowing enthusiasms and self-deception. "The great modern painters and sculptors are the hard-headed ones," he wrote; he admired "such relatively cold, hard heads as Matisse and Picasso"; Matisse in particular appeared detached and cold--he was "cold, undistracted and full of arrogant purpose," he practiced a "cold hedonism."(40) But more was needed than just a willingness to gain experience unshielded by convenient beliefs; one also needed to come at the world with a force equal to its. So as not to be too overwhelmed one needed "to externalize and to synthesize a total view of the world," to always judge experience by measuring it against one's sense of totality. Greenberg called for "strong-mindedness," "serious bias," and an "intense constant perception of tasks" as a way to fuse parts into wholes, to not just submit to pressures but exert pressure in return.

A constantly reappraised sense of the whole was required for rendering judgment, for placing and evaluating sensation and feeling; without it an artist was too easily overcome by experience, succumbing passively to it, leaving it "as is," isolated and disconnected. Such was the price of immediacy--an unwillingness to even try to be detached enough to comprehend the world's unifying forces meant being unified all the more efficiently by them. No matter how heartfelt, one's fitful, immediate expressions were left too vulnerable to misappropriation; one's differences and novelties were too easily made to fit in. Especially given the "breakdown of cultural authority," when distinctions were "be[ing] blurred if not entirely obliterated," Greenberg feared that artists

"in this period tend to be aggressively anti-intellectual--become reluctant to insist on preserving the distinctions, because the contemporary cultural elite, on whom high art presumably depends, can furnish them with neither intellectual and moral support nor markets. Given the temptations of attention and money, even the best of the artists find it difficult amid the present confusion of standards not to surrender to Mr. Luce." Again in 1953, Greenberg insisted on the need to keep indivisible feeling and thought, writing that "sensibility may not be identical with intelligence, but prepossessions of feeling can become premises of thought, and limitations of thought, limitations of emotion and experience."(41)

Greenberg first clearly articulated this argument as early as 1941, but in relation to contemporary poetry rather than painting. "The unity of [Marianne] Moore's work," he shook his head, "is too exclusively a unity of sensibility, without intellectual consistency, without large opinions, without a felt center of convictions. Miss Moore makes only aesthetic discriminations; otherwise everything seems to exist on the same single plane." Greenberg found this shortcoming pervasive among poets at the time--it inflicted the work "of W. C. Williams, E. E. Cummings, H. D., and even Ezra Pound and Wallace Stevens." All shared "an outlook that has to break things into small pieces in order to see them, that has to destroy the organic unity of everything it treats. Its makers have neither inherited nor acquired enough cultural capital to expand beyond the confines of their immediate experience and of a narrowly professional conception of poetry." In the end such poetry, in its "failure to discriminate between the important and unimportant," suffered from "a sensibility that is too private and that has no means of transcending itself."(42)

Greenberg unleashed this argument upon contemporary visual art with particular force and clarity in one long passage from 1947, when writing about "The Present Prospects of American Painting and Sculpture":

> The art of no country can live and perpetuate itself exclusively on spasmodic feeling, high spirits and the infinite subdivision of sensibility. A substantial art requires balance and enough thought to put it in accord with the most advanced view of the world obtaining at the time. Modern man has in theory solved the great public and private questions, and the fact that he has not solved them in practice and that actuality has become more problematic than ever in our day ought not to prevent, in this country, the development of a bland, large, balanced, Apollonian art in which passion does not fill in the gaps left by the faulty or omitted application of theory but takes off from where the most advanced theory stops, and in which an intense detachment informs all. Only such an art, resting on rationality but without permitting itself to be rationalized, can adequately answer contemporary life, found our sensibilities, and, by containing and vicariously relieving them, remunerate us for those particular and necessary frustrations that ensue from living at the present moment.... Balance, largeness, precision, enlightenment, contempt for nature in all its particularity--that is the great and absent art of our age.... We stand in need of a much greater infusion of consciousness than heretofore into what we call the creative. We need men of the world not too much amazed by experience, not too much at a loss in the face of current events, not at all overpowered by their own feelings, men to some extent aware of what has been felt elsewhere since the beginning of recorded history.(43)

What Greenberg wanted was culture as a whole--not just individual expressions, unfused parts no matter how intense, nor just a cultural marketplace unified by a mass "popularization" industry. Part of the problem had to do with gaining perspective, detachment--not easy for a competitive

society in which misunderstood artists struggle to survive and audience members are "anxious to be right." "The difficulty remains," Greenberg sighed, "our failure to relate this high conception of contemporary art to our own lives, our inability to be detached about either art or life, detached and whole as people are who are at home in the world of culture." Another problem was more plainly logistical; it had to do with how to support this ambitiously conceived culture, where to locate it, how to fund and feed and populate it. "The task facing culture in America is to create a milieu that will produce such an art--and literature--and free us (at last!) from the obsession with extreme situations and states of mind."(44)

A whole culture, a place where people can feel at home with culture, a home for culture--how to fill this absence was a question Greenberg would return to again and again. Already in 1944, in a review of the Whitney Annual, he worried aloud that "everybody shows a high level of competence, everybody is learned in the excellences of the past, but a community of excitement and ambition and a real richness of culture is missing." By 1948 he was even trying to turn this very lack of community into a positive, arguing that an "artist has to embrace and content himself, almost, with isolation... isolation is the natural condition of high art in America." But two years later he seemed to change his mind again: "The artist functions best in the company of other artists...art is an intensely social product and suffers in the long run under isolation."(45) The very next year he was warning of "a period of decadence, when talent is no longer borne up, swept along, and extended to its full by collective inspiration," and as an example he gave Braque in the '30s, who "is content to turn out luxury articles which offer us richness of paint quality and color, but only in isolation, not as integrated parts of a whole."(46)

During the mid '40s in particular, crucial years for the development of New York School painting, Greenberg wrote nostalgically about an earlier golden age of avant-garde

activity, which he seemed to take as both norm and ideal, before professionalization and status mongering, when sensibility was unified and theory was at one with practice. "Standing off in the preserves of Bohemia, the impressionists, fauvists and cubists could still indulge in a contemplation that was as sincere and bold as it was largely unconscious; and the soberness of their art, a soberness indispensable to all the very greatest painting, from Ajanta to Paris, stemmed from this automatic contemplation." The same desideratum had appeared in one of his articles three years earlier:

> The milieu and the period were under intense critical pressure, created, as is usually the case, by competing activity in exploration of new possibilities rather than by the words of the critics.... Unlike the advanced artists of the period after 1918, when the reputation of being advanced was a goal in itself and meant eventual rewards, Pissaro and his fellows had little to encourage them except the excitement of discovery. Judgment could be exercised with relative purity and was unwarped by issues accidental to art. Whatever came out of the studios aroused an immediate, keen, and uncompromising response."(47)

No doubt such a vaunted image of artistic community was what Greenberg was hoping to find when he looked around Manhattan in the late '40s and '50s, and sometimes he thought he found it, albeit in a severely deformed state, at once prematurely hatched and already mutilated by hardship. "It is still downtown, below 34th Street, that the fate of American art is being decided--by young people, few over 40, who live in cold-water flats and exist hand to mouth." Always this milieu was on the brink of being engulfed in the shadow of a neighboring scene of corruption, a robust and beckoning commercial culture. Greenberg would map New York accordingly, with blocks of poetic integrity shouldering districts of

calculated packaging, the blue-chip galleries and museums. "The fate of American Art does not depend on the encouragement bestowed or withheld by 57th Street and the Museum of Modern Art," he continued.(48) The map was subject to frequent revising; earlier the same year he had written that "the more ambitious and serious of the youngest generation of American painters live south of 23rd Street, are shown now and then on 57th Street (at Art of This Century, Betty Parsons Gallery, the Egan Gallery and one or two other places), but never figure in the big annual group shows and get almost no publicity." A year later it was adjusted again: "Most of the best painting done in this country at the moment does not reach the public eye, but remains west of Seventh Avenue, stacked against the wall." Wherever it popped up, the milieu was always comprised of the same standard iconography, a certain telltale set design: "a shabby studio on the fifth floor of a cold-water, walk-up tenement on Hudson Street"; or again: "The genuine painters of the youngest generation remain in their cold-water flats, uncompromised."(49) It is hard not to speculate that for Greenberg cold water symbolized a medicine of sorts, a purifying or baptismal fluid that bestowed soberness and keenness, fostering something like Matisse's "cold, hard head" among fledging downtown bohemians.

As has often been noted, at the time and since, Greenberg not only desired the formation of an elite cultural milieu but did what he could to hurry it into being, shaping taste and tendencies of both artists and patrons through various means, which would come to include not only the pulpit of art criticism but also curating and gallery advising (the art historian Bradford Collins has gone so far as to christen Greenberg "the consummate manipulator").(50) Megalomania and monetary greed have been suggested as possible motivations, but it should be remembered just how much Greenberg believed in the twin ideals of a genuine culture on the one hand and a genuinely cultivated individual subject on the other, and in the historical project of

realizing such ideals under the conditions of modernism, a project kept alive up until the '20s with post-impressionism, fauvism and cubism, and still struggling to keep itself from being either pulverized or absorbed but either way lost for good. Such a belief wasn't just held by Greenberg. It was recognized as driving the tactics of people like Leavis, who Lionel Trilling described in 1962 as having "taken it to be his function to organize mobile people, those of them who are gifted and conscious, into a new social class formed on the basis of its serious understanding of and response to literature."(51) As late as 1967 Michael Fried, in the midst of declaring a "war" between modernist art and its pretended heirs and rivals such as minimalism, would also appeal to "serious understanding" as a way of separating out an elite caste: "Certain modes of seriousness...i.e., those established by the finest painting and sculpture of the recent past...are hardly modes of seriousness in which most people feel at home, or even which they find tolerable."(52) Even in 1948 Greenberg, long after he had ceased rallying for socialism, was still assuming the tone of an embattled militant, describing culture using war metaphors (or perhaps cold-war ones): "Middlebrow culture attacks distinctions as such and insinuates itself everywhere, devaluating the precious, infecting the healthy, corrupting the honest and stultifying the wise. Insidiousness is of its essence.... It is necessary for each of us to suspect, and correct, himself. For we are all of us becoming guilty in one way or another."(53)

In the late '40s and early '50s it seems an ambitious artistic milieu was indeed forming, one with perhaps ample enough numbers and structure to keep itself internally cogent and thus not easily distracted or co-opted. It could achieve, in other words, some relative "detachment," figuratively and literally. "We had no general public," Barnett Newman recalled. "The only thing that we did have was an opportunity of seeing each other in shows.... It was not, in that sense, a true marketplace. It was not, in that sense, even a showing

place. It was a very special situation. It was a primitive cultural situation."(54) There was "what Robert Motherwell called an underlying network of awareness, in which everyone knew who was painting what and why." "Communication was entirely verbal," Robert Goldwater wrote in 1959. Goldwater reasoned that, because the New York School artists first convened through the WPA, they both gravitated toward a mural-sized painting and also more readily accepted the absence of a viable market for such unwieldy work. Frankenthaler in 1965 agreed that "in the early '50s, none of us expected to sell pictures. A few people knew your work...a small orbit." Many felt like Goldwater that "a good deal of the social history of American painting during the '50s belongs to 'The Club,'" the organization that Philip Pavia and others opened in 1949 with Leo Castelli's financial backing (in the form of rent money). But the work of threading the community together had begun earlier, when Hans Hofmann's school on 8th Street opened and quickly became, in Greenberg's words, "a focus of social activity." "Everybody went to his school," Pavia admits. "All the language and all the criticism in American art...all these were Hofmann's words he gave to his students, and his students were everybody we knew."(55)

With turf and an exclusive language all its own, the scene around 10th Street was perhaps enough of a self-defined subculture to provide, at least for a time, what Greenberg was asking for, just "a modicum of space in which personal detachment could survive and work up its own proper interestingness."(56) But the ideal very soon grew distant, becoming instead an object of nostalgia. The good immediacy of "automatic contemplation," of "immediate, keen, and uncompromising response" soon gave way to a bad immediacy, to a situation in which everyone seemed to "twitch at once." The Club had been established the same year that Pollock "broke the ice," and the growing attention from outside made denizens of the milieu by turns defensive, self-conscious and career-minded. The title of Goldwater's 1959 article about

the scene, "Everyone Knew What Everyone Else Meant," was already phrased in the past tense. That same year Art News published the artists' panel discussions over the question "Is There a New Academy?" and three years after that The Club closed (followed the next year by the demise of the Cedar Bar). But disenchantment seems to have overcome Greenberg earlier; by the mid '50s he was already complaining about the "Tenth Street Touch." Within the tight-knit downtown milieu he observed a growing conservatism, a weakness for the security and sense of belonging gotten through group conformity and obligatory mutual affirmation. His first article of 1952 chastised downtown artists for "rejecting" Barnett Newman's two recent shows at Betty Parsons's: mounting paintings of "both nerve and truth...Newman took a chance and has suffered for it." "Those who so vehemently resent him," the critic continued, "should be given pause," since "art can make you angry only if it threatens your habits of taste."(57) Among the downtowners, habits of taste had congealed around de Kooning's seemingly less radical style of impetuous, painterly "action painting," which Greenberg took aim at three years later, accusing it of "nostalgia," of remaining too faithful to an outworn cubist approach founded on value contrasts that were themselves leftover from figurative illusionism. "If de Kooning's art has found a readier acceptance than most other forms of abstract expressionism, it is because his need to include the past as well as forestall the future reassures most of us."(58)

By 1960, the downtown milieu had become thoroughly "cosmopolitan." "Not being provincial," Greenberg judged, "has an effect all its own. A certain vehemence, confidence and even authority make themselves felt in hollow as well as resounding works of art.... Artists are buoyed by a sense of vast possibilities of attention and reputation.... Never before in New York has there been so much false and inflated painting and sculpture, never before so many false and inflated reputations." The main culprit was "the de Kooning

and Kline school, with its cubist hangover," which Greenberg accused of encouraging expressions of not individuality but other-directedness. "A cycle of virtuosity began with that school. Virtuosity implies performance, and performance implies conformity with received tastes."(59) Four years later Kaprow would agree: "Since 1952...artists have found their identities over and over in that white expanse of canvas, and many look remarkably alike." Beyond that, the "general public," which Newman had claimed was missing from downtown's "primitive cultural situation," had seemingly invaded and taken over. According to Kaprow,

> The old idea of an Artists' Clan or Group no longer exists...what has been called an 'art public' is no longer a select, small group upon whom an artist can depend for a stock response. It is now a large, diffused mass, soon to be called 'the public-in-general'... comprised of readers of the weeklies, viewers of T.V., visitors to Worlds Fairs, here and abroad, members of 'culture' clubs and subscribers to mail-order art lessons, charitable organizations, civic-improvement committees, political campaigners, schools and universities...(60)

A number of commentators took this turn of events not as reason to seek out new pockets of resistance but as evidence that such resistance had now become impossible. There were no longer two different cultures, no dissociation within sensibility, no inside or outside--all was one. Lawrence Alloway, as early as 1958, argued that "the new role for the fine arts is to be one of the possible forms of communication in an expanding framework that also includes the mass arts."(61) In 1965 Susan Sontag, in an essay titled "One Culture and the New Sensibility" that ran in Mademoiselle, announced that "what we are witnessing is not so much a conflict of cultures as the creation of a new (potentially unitary) kind of sensibility."

> The role of the individual artist, in the business of making unique objects for the purpose of giving pleasure and educating conscience and sensibility, has repeatedly been called into question.... All kinds of conventionally accepted boundaries have thereby been challenged: not just the one between the "scientific" and the "literary-artistic" cultures, or the one between "art" and "non-art"; but also many established distinctions within the world of culture itself--that between form and content, the frivolous and the serious, and (a favorite of literary intellectuals) "high" and "low" culture.... The problem of "the two cultures"...is not a problem for most of the creative artists of our time...most of these artists have broken, whether they know it or not, with the Matthew Arnold notion of culture [which] defines art as the criticism of life.... The new sensibility understands art as the extension of life--this being understood as the representation of (new) modes of vivacity.... The distinction between "high" and "low" culture seems less and less meaningful...[it] simply does not make sense for a creative community of artists and scientists engaged in programming sensations, uninterested in art as a species of moral journalism.(62)

Many others viewed as a foregone conclusion art's loss of a separate identity and its inability to maintain a detachment from--and thus critical vantage on--life. Not only had "art entered into the media system," Harold Rosenberg admitted, but "the history of art as a distinct category of artifacts seems to have reached a dead end." Another critic, Paul Cummings, noticed how "mass media with its half-page of art news" transformed "artists [into] celebrities vying with movie stars and politicians."(63) This "sweeping process," which Greenberg warned was "endangering" high culture back in 1947, seemed to have reached completion--"wiping out the

social distinctions between the more and less cultivated, render[ing] standards of art and thought provisional." There would be no permanent home for culture. Now more than ever it seemed that, "to locate the constantly shifting true center of seriousness, the ambitious American writer and artist must from moment to moment constantly improvise both career and art. It becomes increasingly difficult to tell who is serious and who not."(64)

Greenberg would have to revise the map more radically than before. Throughout the '50s he had been developing a relationship with a few artists who lived in Washington D.C. In 1950, while teaching a course at Black Mountain, he met Kenneth Noland. That same year Noland married an ex-student of David Smith's, Cornelia Langer, who was also a classmate and good friend of Smith's first wife Jean. Beginning in 1953 Greenberg and Smith would make frequent trips down to Washington, and Noland in turn would travel often to New York to visit Greenberg. In April that year Noland brought with him a teaching colleague and artist-friend from D.C., Morris Louis. Only nine months later, Greenberg included paintings by Louis, Noland and Langer in the show "Emerging Talent," which he curated for the Kootz Gallery.

Greenberg often wrote about how art of any ambition needed to seek out "the master current" or "mainstream" of tradition and culture, and as late as 1950 he voiced leeriness about what he called "tributaries"--distant provinces where artists "feel less free to take liberties with the tradition than those in its center."(65) But all this seemed to change as circumstances worsened, as the center drew closer, establishing itself anew in New York; indeed, the title Greenberg gave a 1954 essay, published while the Kootz show was still up, was "Some Advantages of Provincialism." By 1960 he would proclaim Noland and Louis as the two painters he considered "serious candidates for major status," and the fact both lived in Washington D.C. was "not unrelated to the quality of their work." It was precisely because "250 miles separate them from the new Babylon of

art," Greenberg argued, that the two painters could "keep in steady contact with the New York art scene without being subjected as constantly to its pressures to conform.... When they return to Washington to paint it is to challenge the fashions and success of New York, and also its worldly machinery."(66) After all, detachment, as he had previously claimed, was "the last defense" and only real hope for a truly unified sensibility and culture. To be preserved, that detachment would now have to be measured, not in city blocks, but in hundreds of miles and across several state borders.

## Allover and At Once

Greenberg himself would end up having to travel quite a ways, figuratively speaking, before he could feel comfortable supporting what would come to be known as color-field painting. The completion of that journey is perhaps what his essay "Louis and Noland," which appeared in the May 1960 issue of Art International, celebrates. Only months earlier each of the painters had enjoyed a solo show arranged by Greenberg at the French & Company Gallery in New York. The essay starkly opposes the sensibility of the two D.C. artists against New York's "Babylon" and its metonymy, its "machinery" and "conformism"--"where painterliness in abstract art has degenerated almost everywhere into a thing of mannered and aggressive surfaces." The terms Greenberg uses to describe Louis's and Noland's work--its "open color...color as somehow disembodied, and therefore more purely optical," its "freshness and immediacy of surface," its "revulsion against the sculptural" in favor of "areas and zones," "its clarity and its energy," its sense of "limitless space, weightlessness, air"--these became evaluative keywords in a synecdochic terminology the critic had been laboring to develop ever since the mid-1950s when he started championing Newman, Rothko and Still over de Kooning and Kline. By the end of the essay Greenberg explicitly announces the two D.C.

painters as the rightful heirs to the first generation of New York School artists. They "are the only painters to have come up in American art since that 'first wave' who approach its level."(67)

From the confidence and relaxed euphoria of the essays' tone, it is impossible to tell that in fact Greenberg's appreciation of such large-scale color abstraction--indeed, his very poetic sensibility--needed to overcome numerous road blocks, periods of tremendous worry and doubt, radical shifts and adaptations, all of which is well documented in the course of his earlier criticism. Twelve years before, when he was still a beat reviewer having to cover the art scene in Babylon, Greenberg most likely would have called Louis and Noland decorators. That is basically what he called the artists of the "first wave."

Greenberg's mixed feelings about such painting was already well established by the time the New York School hit its stride around 1948; it can be detected in his famous description from that year of Abstract Expressionism as "a large-scale easel art [made] by expanding Matisse's hot color into bigger more simplified compositional schemes...all this helped with Picasso's calligraphy."(68) In Greenberg's working out of the story the more heroic roles go to Matisse and Picasso, and to a lesser extent to Klee and Miro--that is, artists who never entirely broke from representation. Meanwhile, the more "pure" abstractionist Mondrian is viewed ambivalently at best, if not as downright villainous. That is because for Greenberg, that famous champion of abstraction, the problem with Mondrian is precisely the problem with abstract painting. Here, for example, is Greenberg in 1940, in only his third essay devoted to visual art: he writes that, at present,

> painting finds itself with almost nothing left to do. The path it has been forced to follow for the last 40 years has narrowed now and closed into the cul de sac of the pure single-plane abstraction. ...The present crisis

> may be the death agony of Western painting, of that tradition which, beginning in Northern Italy in the 13th century, has evolved continuously until Mondrian.... Mondrian and his fellow purists, by pushing the single-plane abstraction as far as it can go, have reached something which escapes the definition of an easel painting and threatens constantly to become decoration.(69)

What for Greenberg rescues painting at this crucial juncture, what pulls it back from the abyss of decoration, is something very much like literariness, paintings that retain the feel and space, the basic dramatic structure, of representation. It is, he writes, "Picasso, Miro and Klee who have in common, in their desire to save easel painting, a concern with poetry, with something that exceeds the purely visual. All three have rejected the confinement to the single plane which is the purist prison. They seek to preserve the ambiguity of the pictorial surface, making the hard surface of the canvas seem to vibrate, shift, cede." Nevertheless, Greenberg ends his account on a sour note; these three painters, he admits, "have not succeeded in saving the easel painting. Their success has been too intensely personal. They have established no style of which other painters can take advantage, no style on which those who come after can build."(70)

All these quotes are from "The Agony of Painting," an essay Greenberg intended as a follow-up to "Avant-Garde and Kitsch" and "Toward a Newer Laocoon" but which Partisan Review found too unwieldy to publish. Yet it is an essay Greenberg often returned to, mining it for quotes and ideas. Seven years later, for example, he was still complaining that Picasso's "error...since 1930...consists in pursuing expressiveness and emotional emphasis beyond the coherence of style."(71) In 1948, Mondrian was still being made to epitomize the end of easel painting, his canvases being "perhaps the clearest anticipation of...the even, allover,

polyphonic picture in which every square inch is rendered with equal emphasis and there are no longer centers of interest, highlights, dominating forms, every part of the canvas being equivalent in stress to every other part. Texture and surface carry everything and the picture becomes reversible, so to speak--with beginning, middle and end made interchangeable."(72)

Thierry de Duve has recently claimed that Greenberg never used the term "allover" except in relation to Pollock.(73) This is not true. While Pollock would indeed become crucial to what Greenberg meant by the term, as we have just seen the critic's first use of it was in reference to Mondrian, and precisely as Mondrian represented the threat of "pure" abstraction. In 1949 Greenberg would again apply "allover" to a whole group of artists and even to past styles: in response to a show of paintings by William Congdon, he writes, "We have already seen this kind of repetitious, all-over composition, without beginning, middle, or end, in analytical cubism and in the recent work of such painters as Mark Tobey, Jackson Pollock, Janet Sobel, and Mordecai Ardon-Bronstein."(74) De Duve further argues that Greenberg never regarded "allover" as a conceptual category, only ever using it as a descriptive adjective. But this again is misleading. For Greenberg the canvases of Mondrian, Pollock, Tobey et al. deserved the term insofar as they exemplified "the terminus toward which several of the most important threads in contemporary painting now converge."(75)

Greenberg came to use the word allover often as a pejorative; he spoke of "the danger of monotony that arises from the even, allover design." Another pejorative was uniformity--"the very notion" of which, Greenberg wrote, "is anti-aesthetic." Flatness, monotony, uniformity, allover--these would at times be opposed in his thinking to unity and "at-onceness." For example, in 1944 Greenberg found fault with such artists as Pissaro and Courbet for "mistak[ing] uniformity for unity." Unity was "the supreme quality...the highest measure" of visual art, its "first requirement"; he

would repeat this staple of aesthetic theory time and again, that "the task of art is to impose the greatest possible organic unity upon the greatest diversity"; or that a "triumphant unity crowns the painter's work...when all parts fall into place and require and create one another...when one can experience the picture like a single sound made by many voices and instruments that reverberates without changing, that presents an enclosed and instantaneous yet infinite variety." And this unity, this dramatic emergence of conclusive form, is what constitutes the experience of at-onceness: a picture's "unity should be immediately evident"; "ideally the whole of a picture should be taken in at a glance...in an indivisible instant of time...all there at once, like a sudden revelation."(76)

The tendency to replace unity with uniformity was not confined to just contemporary painting either. Greenberg also complained about poets and their "inability to modulate, to distribute the emphasis so that a poem will move dramatically and take on shape"; instead "a kind of aesthetic pantheism" reigned in poetry, according to which "everything seems to exist on the same single plane....unrelieved and unshaded... monotonous."(77) All the same, why this remained such a pressing concern for Greenberg, and indeed became his primary concern by the end of the '40s, had to do foremost with developments in New York School art and in particular the emergence of Pollock's drip paintings. Of the many breakthroughs by painters between 1947-50, he would later write that "the flattening surfaces of their canvases compelled them to move along the picture plane laterally and seek in its sheer physical size the space necessary for the telling of their kind of pictorial story."(78) At the time, however, Greenberg felt exasperated that all the flattening and enlarging risked putting an end to the story of painting, its very tradition. He had cautioned against overly large pictures since early on: "Most contemporary painting is best when small in format," he wrote in 1941. "When the abstract painter grows tired, he becomes an interior decorator.... As

a rule the modern painter cannot cover large spaces successfully--the revival of mural painting has so far not disproved this. He is at his best when forced to compress and tighten."(79) About Pollock's show in 1943, Greenberg noticed that "the smaller works are much more conclusive...in larger format [Pollock] spends himself in too many directions at once." And yet flatness and alloverness seemed to mandate that pictures expand laterally: it was the "'allover' design, covering the picture surface with an even, largely undifferentiated system of uniform motifs that cause the result to look as though it could be continued indefinitely beyond the frame like a wallpaper pattern." Thus not only largeness but flatness too proved a threat, the one being a function of the other. "When the artist flattens...the easel picture begins to feel itself compromised in its very nature." The issue was brought to a head in the famous essay "The Crisis of the Easel Picture" of 1948, in which Greenberg writes of the Abstract Expressionists that, "using the easel painting as they do--and cannot help doing--these artists are destroying it."(80)

The tug-of-war between alloverness and at-onceness for the soul of modern painting continued to worry Greenberg well into the '50s. About Newman, Still and Rothko, he wrote that "the crucial issue raised by the work of these three artists is where the pictorial stops and decoration begins." And when he thought Pollock's work failed it was usually because "space tautens but does not burst into a picture"; "the picture becomes merely a fragment"; it "does not finish inside the canvas." Meanwhile, those older, more poetic painters such as Picasso and Miro, whom Greenberg had opposed to the flattener Mondrian, their "best work has been in black and white and in reduced format.... The surviving old masters of our time...appear to have reacted to this crisis in a conservative way."(81)

This "crisis" or "death agony" of painting, as Greenberg referred to it repeatedly from 1940 on, marks one of the few instances when the critic felt indecisive, when he couldn't

judge. Greenberg didn't want to side with a backward-looking, nostalgic art (nostalgia was what he later would accuse de Kooning of). If nothing else, flatness offered a means for painting to continue its development ("to keep culture moving" was one of the slogans of "Avant-Garde and Kitsch"). In addition, it led to pictures that better satisfied the modern era's brutally honest, empirical, materialist sensibilities. Flatness was how modernism manifested itself in the visual arts in the first place. "Painting since Manet has emphasized that a picture has to have a 'back,'" Greenberg wrote. "It cannot simply fade off in depth into nothingness; every square millimeter of picture space, even if it represents only the empty sky, must play a positive role."(82) And yet this same flatness demanded by modern sensibility was at odds with painting's potential for aesthetic achievement beyond mere decoration. As Greenberg wrote in 1948:

> This very uniformity, this dissolution of the picture into sheer texture, sheer sensation, into the accumulation of similar units of sensation, seems to answer something deep-seated in contemporary sensibility. It corresponds perhaps to the feeling that all hierarchical distinctions have been exhausted, that no area or order of experience is either intrinsically or relatively superior to any other. It may speak for a monist naturalism that takes all the world for granted and for which there are no longer either first or last things, the only valid distinction being that between the more or less immediate.(83)

The brutal match between harsh modern reality and its unshielded empirical reception within individual experience seemed to lead to a shell-shocked cultural sensibility, a numb, blank passiveness and acceptance. Greenberg ends the passage with a shrug: "Or maybe it means something else--I cannot tell." Like the paintings, he felt at a loss to

distinguish, and said so. One of the only other times Greenberg expressed outloud such ambivalence was when reviewing Pollock's 1947 show, with its bigger, flatter canvases that nearly filled the gallery walls. "Pollock points a way beyond the easel, beyond the mobile, framed picture, to the mural, perhaps--or perhaps not. I cannot tell."(84)

What so many later commentators take as Greenberg's emblem of purity was in fact treacherously two-sided. For him the flatness of modernism's "even, allover" paintings signaled both a promise and a danger; it offered a means for painting to consolidate its identity by emphasizing its essential material conditions and at the same time threatened rupture, loss of identity and dispersion, a kind of painting that merely spread out and blended in, that was indistinguishable from the general surroundings and décor. "The pristine flatness of the stretched canvas struggles to overcome every other element," he explained in "Towards a Newer Laocoon." Flatness is specific to painting, and therefore is what distinguishes it from the other arts; it secures painting's individuality, its "ownness," its poetics. "To restore the identity of an art," he continues, "the opacity of its medium must be emphasized." But the modern impulse toward flattening pictorial space also forces the easel picture to violate its very nature. "Painting of a kind that identifies itself exclusively with its surface cannot help developing toward decoration." The material identity of painting--flatness--was at odds with its historical identity, that of being an easel picture. "The form of the easel picture," Greenberg admits in 1948, "is conditioned by its social function--that is, to hang on a wall...it cut[s] the illusion of a boxlike cavity into the wall behind it and organiz[es] within this cavity the illusion of forms, light, and space." This is what makes easel painting "a unique product of Western culture," he writes. "We have only to compare its principles of unity with those of the Persian miniature or Chinese hanging painting, neither of which seems

to isolate itself quite as much...from its architectural surroundings [nor] show so much independence of the demands of decoration."(85) Rather than identify with the wall it spreads across, the easel picture claims a degree of independence by carving out a space of its own at that point (presumably any point) on the wall where it happens to rest. The easel painting, in other words, is, by its very nature, relatively detached.

In the easel painting, Greenberg identified a model for the kind of synthesis he was always calling for--in art as in people. Here was a perfect combination of detachment and at-onceness, intelligence and sensibility, thought and feeling, theory and practice. As Greenberg saw it, the easel picture, with its vividly unified image separated off in an illusionistic box-like space that its frame carves out, allows for a detached view and larger comprehension but does so by feeding directly off dramatic experience rather than reasoning or intellectualizing such directness away. The easel picture has encoded within itself the very resources by which individuals--artists and viewers alike--can transcend modern conditions, can "expand the confines of immediate experience and a narrowly professional conception," precisely the infliction suffered by so much modern art. Moreover, the easel picture modeled for Greenberg individuality itself--this was in fact its historical origin. As Greenberg tells the story, the reason why easel painting arose out of and differentiated itself from stained-glass windows, manuscript illuminations and church frescoes is because early Renaissance moderns such as "the magnates and clerical bureaucrats of Flanders found in framed pictures a proper means by which to celebrate themselves publicly in their character as individuals, for the framed picture spoke for itself and was not to be subordinated to its architectural surroundings in the role of mere decoration."(86)

According to Greenberg, the framed easel painting privileges the individual viewer over its architectural support; it "subordinates decorative to dramatic effect."(87)

At the core of its pictorial structure lies an imaginary axis that runs parallel to an individual's line of sight, a line extending from the eyes past the plane of the wall where the painting sits to a vanishing point nested at the farthest reaches of the painting's illusory space. From out of this basic alignment the picture's "principles of unity" are derived. By contrast, a flat, tautened picture of the kind that began to dominate by the late '40s and early '50s turns this axis 90 degrees; it extends itself, like the wall it is hung on, perpendicular to the viewer's sight-line. So what are the principles unifying this kind of painting? If the space of the easel picture seems to mature and complete itself at its vanishing point, and if the dimensions of the picture's framing edge in turn seem to dilate in accordance with the need to focus and unify this visual push inward, then where does the space of the newly flattened painting reach maturation, what needs or limits dictate its dimensions, where does it end? And what about its allegiances; what changes are wrought in this new kind of painting's relationship to its viewers and to its surroundings?

Again, for a long time Greenberg wasn't sure exactly what final form the new "post-cubist painting," as he was calling Pollock's works by 1947, would take. Certain influences were posited--Greenberg pointed to the muralist Siqueiros (whose workshop both Pollock and Louis attended in 1936). But the emerging paradigm seemed to suggest less murals than "wallpaper patterns capable of being extended indefinitely," and for this he felt the precedent lay in impressionism.(88) "Monet was a flat painter...a concern that leads from him straight to Mondrian," he stressed in 1945; while Pissaro was the one who made work so "egalitarian in treatment" it seemed to "mistake uniformity for unity."(89) Greenberg used the opposition between cubism and impressionism as a template with which to chart the New York School's development, although it wasn't always clear which direction he favored. In the early '40s he was consistent in

his praise of cubism as the grand plastic style of the 20th century: "The great painting tradition of our day," he wrote in 1944, "runs from Cézanne through fauvism and cubism." At the same time, he wasn't entirely condemning of impressionism: a month earlier he allowed that "there were possibilities in impressionism which the 19th century failed to exhaust."(90) But by the late-'40s cubism came to be portrayed mostly as the last refuge of easel painting; Greenberg constantly evoked it from 1947 on as both still necessary and already abandoned, as if he was unsure whether to contest or concede its loss. In 1948 he would publish an essay titled "The Decline of Cubism," albeit preceded a few months earlier by an even darker assessment of impressionism, expressed in a review in which he accuses Carl Holty's paintings of "remain[ing] trapped in impressionist feeling--which by now is equivalent to academicism."(91)

Later that same year, Greenberg seemed fed up with overly large, overly flat painting. He once again rallied to the defense of cubism, while singling out for harsh reprimand impressionism and its progeny of imagined alternatives to the easel convention--including many non-Western forms and even Pollock himself:

> Since impressionism, painting in western Europe and America has been engaged in unraveling its own tradition.... Since it has freed itself from the necessity of representation, painting seems at liberty to reject all but the most recent past; it feels that it has made a new start and created a new instrument for itself. I myself believe this is an illusion.... Abstract art is still western European art; one still--even if only barely--paints easel pictures; one does not decorate Haida cloths or make sand drawings.(92)

Cubism once again set the criteria. Reviewing Pollock's show in early 1949, Greenberg wrote confidently that it "quieted any doubts this reviewer may have felt," and did so precisely

by seeming to embrace rather than challenge the easel format. Pollock's Number One (fig. 14) he found "as well contained in its canvas as anything by a Quattrocento master...this one avoids any connotation of a frieze or hanging scroll and presents an almost square surface that belongs very much to easel painting."(93) But the 1949 show also included works like the tall, thin Number Five, the skeins of which are mostly cropped in mid-flight. Also in abundance were canvases measuring only three feet high yet over nine feet in length. Fragments, friezes and hanging scrolls continued to amass like barbarians at the gate. By mid-1949, only months after Pollock's alleged return to the easel format, doubts once again surfaced, and Greenberg resumed his fretting over painting's future. "The fact is, I fear, that easel painting...may soon be unable to say enough about what we feel to satisfy us."(94)

During the course of such back-and-forth deliberations, Greenberg would at times oppose cubism's frame-bound structure to impressionism's indiscriminate "color texture" in culture-versus-nature or active-versus-passive terms, even along gender lines. Impressionist painting was allover and "formless"; it was passive and thus aligned with nature. Monet, for example, "saw the world as sadly reconciled to itself"; he held to a "notion of the picture as a slice of nature unmanipulated by 'human' interest." Like his paintings, he himself seemed passive, reconciled, "surrender[ing] almost in advance" to the canvas's allover flatness; thus his tendency of "dissolving objects and attacking identities." In contrast to Picasso's "potent personality," Monet lacked self-possession, even painted as if unconscious: he "forgot that art is relations, not matter"--for "all matter can do is repeat itself."(95)

If cubism and the framed easel picture stood for unity and drama, impressionism meant passivity and repetition. Or, as Greenberg regularly translated those terms into pictorial ones, it stood for wallpaper and decoration--precisely what he most often said was lying in wait beyond the historical

and cultural limits of the easel. It was in the form of decoration that Greenberg imagined painting being co-opted by society--even, or all the more so, when its practitioners dreamt of fashioning "new instruments" tied to esoteric predecessors like hanging scrolls and sand painting. Greenberg wrote in 1941 about "how easy it is for the abstract painter to degenerate into a decorator. It is the besetting danger of abstract art. We, with our tradition of easel painting, are not satisfied to have our pictorial art in the form of decoration. We demand of a picture what we demand of literature and music; dramatic interest, interior movement; we want a picture to be a little drama, something, even if only a landscape or still life, in which the eye can fix and involve itself."(96) It became a recurring theme of his criticism: Carl Holty's work only won approval when "at last decoration begins to be overcome by easel painting." And it particularly preoccupied his thinking about Pollock. Even the paintings he liked by Pollock left him uneasy: "I already hear: 'wallpaper patterns,'" he confides in the midst of praising the painter's 1948 show.(97) Greenberg wasn't the only one: that same year Francis Henry Taylor, director of the Metropolitan Museum, compared Pollock's work to wallpaper in Life magazine's "Round Table on Modern Art."(98) "This artist is much, much more than a grandiose decorator," Greenberg responded, albeit as part of a photo-feature on Pollock published amid fashion spreads and society gossip in Harper's Bazaar.(99)

In Greenberg's eyes, if there was an artist whose work still embodied a thriving cubist idiom by the end of the '40s it was David Smith, the only other artist the critic touted as highly as Pollock. What Greenberg saw in Smith's work (fig. 15) was precisely an allegiance between cubist structure and what he felt was some much needed cultural expression of masculinity. "Smith's virile elegance is without example in a country where elegance is otherwise obtained only by femininity or by [a] wistful, playful, derivative kind of decorativeness."(100) For Greenberg, not

only was decoration coded feminine, but so was passivity in general, including passive consumption. Indeed, Greenberg often let on that he feared modernism's encouragement of blank acceptance fed into passive consumption, and that the shift from the cultivation of individual sensibility to status mongering and the consumption of "knowingness" was gendered (such consumption being best suited to "permanent college girls, whether male or female").(101) Others did too: Meyer Schapiro, for example, worried a decade earlier over too close an identification between art and the women of the "rentier leisure class": "A woman of this class is essentially an artist.... Her daily life is filled with aesthetic choices." In The Lonely Crowd, Riesman observed that "women are the accepted leaders of consumption in our society."(102) At times Greenberg made it seem as if the predominance of a more decorative painting was not the result of material constraints upon the medium but rather due to an encroaching feminine sensibility inflicting male creation. He dismissed Stuart Davis's cubism, which he claimed the artist "appropriated as a decorative method," for making "immediately pleasing what more seminal artists produced at the cost of strain and frequent error." "The only salvation I can suggest for feminine artists such as Davis and Calder," Greenberg continued, "is that society give them fixed, exactly defined tasks that require them to fit their cheerfulness and discretion into the general décor of modern life in a systematic way. Let Davis and Calder create an atmosphere in which to move, not solo works of art. There are the examples of Boucher and Fragonard, whose spirit their own resembles."(103)

Two years later Greenberg used Davis and Calder as backdrop against which to contrast all the more dramatically Smith and his virility. Smith was descended from the potent Picasso; both were master-builders: ""Picasso asks you to construct...to survey the terrain of your emotion more consciously and build upon it the largest and most substantial edifice possible." Unlike Klee, who is "an

interior decorator rather than an architect...Picasso sees the picture as a wall."(104) And yet Smith went Picasso one better; as Greenberg pointed out, where the senior artist had abandoned cubism by the '30s for a mode of expression too intense and personal to fit within "the coherence of style," Smith's art had emerged by '47 into "a new unity of style...a style that is able to say everything he has to say with the maximum of economy," a style that the artist achieved by "streamlining without emasculating his invention." By the mid '50s Greenberg would even call Smith's style "classical."(105)

Greenberg's appreciation for Smith blossomed precisely at that time when the crisis of the easel picture came to dominate his thinking, and he fashioned for the sculptor's output a historical narrative that made it into the true heir to Picasso's and Braque's work during cubism's glory days of the early teens. Smith's constructions, as Greenberg told the story, grew out of cubism insofar as cubism gave birth to collage, which in its turn morphed into bas-relief before finally giving way to constructivism, of which Smith's work was the furthest development at present. It was a story about the flattening of modern painting that offered an alternative, more upbeat ending, and Greenberg repeated it insistently throughout the late '40s:

> Collage...is the most succinct and direct single clue to the aesthetic of genuinely modern art.... The picture became indissolubly one with the pigment, the texture, and the flat surface that constituted it as an object. The next step in the denial of illusion was to lift...this or that part of the picture physically close to the eye, as in bas-relief...[which] laid the foundation for constructivism.... The picture had now attained to the full and declared three-dimensionality we automatically attribute to the notion, "object," and painting was being transformed, in the course of a

> strictly coherent process with a logic all its own, into a new kind of sculpture.(106)

"Cubist painting...transmitted the style, single-handedly, to sculpture... The same process that has impoverished painting has enriched sculpture," he would later conclude. But it wasn't just sculpture that painting had transmuted itself into--what was emerging was a whole new aesthetic subspecies of industrialism itself. "David Smith's work, David Hare's recent show, Theodore Roszak's return to activity...all point to the possible flowering of a new sculpture in America, a sculpture that exploits modern painting and draftsmanship, new industrial methods, and industrial materials." A year later, in 1947, Greenberg again hailed the arrival of a new industrial high art, "not a renaissance, but a naissance of sculpture in America: sculpture that in its methods and very utensils no less than in its conceptions--which, like our architecture and engineering, tend toward linearism, flat surfaces, and the denial of weight and mass--attaches itself more intimately to industrialism than any other form of art now being practiced."(107)

Greenberg would start calling such artworks "constructions" to stress their blood ties to engineering and architecture. As his excitement over these new constructions made clear, they seemed to point a way beyond many of the impasses the critic had been running up against. They were built up rather than spread out, handling large scale in a manner that was virile and masculine rather than passive and dissipating. Moreover, in their allegiance to structure and line over formless color and texture, they reconvened cubism's insistence on the frame, even when blown-up to nearly the size of a room. This was again something Greenberg thought the new sculpture inherited from early cubist collage. "The greatest success in collage so far," he wrote, "has been gained through compositions based on a preponderance of rectangular forms whose contours are kept

roughly parallel to the edge of the canvas--in other words, repeat the canvas's shape." He hailed Pevsner and Gabo as "establish[ing] an altogether new genre in visual art," and complimented their "abstract constructions" and "pictures in three-dimensional space" for holding to a sense of frame: "I like the pieces' frontality, their affinity with the easel picture, which makes them easy to see from a single point of view."(108)

The frame, of course, meant detachment; it meant privileging the individual viewer over the surrounding décor. But what was formerly an antagonism now resolved itself through a synthesis. With the new alignment between cubist-derived architecture and sculpture, the frame privileged the individual viewer in its very role as surrounding décor, a décor that circumscribed and ordered the surroundings through an emphasis on relations over repetition, thus "subordinating decorative to dramatic effect." For Greenberg the frame detached individuals not by isolating and privatizing them, but by subjecting a sense of order on their surroundings, by imposing something like judgment. "The control of some fixed point of view," as Greenberg explained the frame's function, "has an authority more than personal."(109) The frame, as the very figure of eyesight both as it separates and holds at a critical distance and as it also deliberately focuses attention, reaching forward and outward in an attempt to grasp, comprehend and empathize, negotiates between individuals and environment, subjects and objects, discouraging either too much inner-directedness or too much other-directedness, too much mindless self-expression or too much mindless conformity and blending in. As Greenberg described them, the new sculptural constructions assumed this task quite literally. Standing halfway between the frames of easel paintings and architectural frames, they negotiated between a pictorial inside and the real, industrial world outside--they were frames at once pictorial and "as palpable and independent and present as the houses we live in and the furniture we use."(110)

In addition to their preoccupation with framing and structuring, Greenberg also saw the new sculptures as inhabiting the cutting edge of developments in advanced art altogether. While painting endured its death agony throughout the '40s, "the new sculptor has the advantage of working in a virgin medium." In 1949 Greenberg announced that "we shall no longer be able to rely upon painting as largely as we used to for a visual ordering of our experience"; and yet sculpture, his essay continues, "has lately undergone a transformation that seems to endow it with a greater range of expression for modern sensibility than painting now has." And yet, paradoxically, this gravitation toward frame and edge seemed to locate sculpture away from the center of attention toward its margin. "Sculpture is slower to feel the pull and tug of public taste," Greenberg wrote. "The new sculpture is protected from public taste by its very novelty. This makes it rather hard, financially, for the sculptor himself, but he has the large or small satisfaction of knowing that his work will be bought for the right reasons in most cases. It still takes a certain independence of taste to invest in a Smith or a Hare."(111)

Before Greenberg's search for new, uncorrupted painters led him to travel beyond New York all the way to Washington D.C., he seemed to be on the verge of abandoning his advocacy of painting altogether and picking up the torch for sculpture instead. Like the early century avant-garde bohemias he so idealized, the new sculpture seemed to enjoy independence, some relative detachment, "a modicum of space" in which creation, contemplation and judgment could be practiced innocently, for their own sake, as if "automatically." And yet the new makers of constructions didn't discover and safeguard this space on the margins of society but found it instead emerging from within its very fabric, in the materials and methods of its industrial infrastructure. In this, the new sculpture hinted at a possible overcoming of yet another impasse; it held out a fresh opportunity by which

advanced art could be reconciled on some practical level with middle-class society.

Greenberg's advocacy of the new sculpture developed in tandem with a shift in his political outlook. In the early '40s the question of finding an adequate home within society for advanced art would be answered by Greenberg with a political prophecy--such a home was part of the promise of socialism. Present reality offered little in the way of even suitable architecture: "No adequate modern style has yet been developed for the dwelling," Greenberg wrote dismissively in 1944.(112) But only a couple of years later, with the promise of socialism seemingly extinguished for good, available architectural offerings--or the lack thereof--became an issue of paramount importance, the defining issue for visual art as Greenberg saw it. The hopes of culture rested not on the establishment of a new political and economic order, but on a new cooperative understanding forged between architects and artists.

One of the main problems standing in the way was the hostility, not just ideological but logistical, that New York School painting showed toward the homes of potential patrons. As Robert Motherwell explained, "American painters work in what were once small factories, whereas European artists work either in apartments or studios that were designed in terms of the scale of easel painting."(113) This Greenberg addressed in 1948:

> Easel painting is on its way out; abstract pictures rarely go with the furniture; and the canvas, even when it measures ten feet by ten, has become a kind of private journal.... I do not know if there's anything in modern architecture itself that explicitly invites this tendency...while the painter's relation to his art has become more private than ever before because of shrinking appreciation on the public's part, the architectural and, presumably, social location for which he destines his product has become, in inverse ratio,

> more public. This is the paradox, the contradiction, in the master-current of painting. Perhaps the contradiction between the architectural destination of abstract art and the very, very private atmosphere in which it is produced will kill ambitious painting in the end.... The only solution to the crisis would be an increasing acceptance by the public of advanced painting, and at same time an increasing rejection of all other kinds.(114)

Greenberg repeatedly lobbied for increased patronage of the new sculpture as well. "It is to be hoped that Smith's show sells sufficiently to permit him to embark on larger-scale works," he advocated a year earlier. "Certainly, of all the arts, the new pictorial or constructivist sculpture relates best to American décor, understands it best, and would affect it most directly," was his pitch the year before that. "The future of art and literature," he continues, "will brighten in this country only when a new cultural elite appears with enough money and consciousness to counterbalance the pressures of the new mass market." And then the line, spoken as if under his breath: "The other alternative is socialism, but who talks of socialism in America?"(115)

The campaign to nurture patronage among the American middle-class was intensified by the Museum of Modern Art and other cultural institutions and interests after World War II. In the exhibition season spanning 1948-49, 12 different museums mounted shows dedicated to applied design, including "For Modern Living" at the Detroit Institute of Art. At the same time that a collaborative model for "An Ideal Museum" made by Pollock and the architect Peter Blake was on view at Betty Parsons's gallery in late 1949 (fig. 16), MoMA opened "Painting and Sculpture in Architecture," an exhibition of photographs documenting the deployment of avant-garde art within modern architectural settings, while outside in the museum's sculpture garden a new "modern house" designed by Marcel Breuer was installed. That same year, MoMA also

mounted "Modern Art in Your Life," accompanied by a publication of the same name that marveled at how "the appearance and shape of countless objects of our everyday environment are related to, or derived from, modern painting and sculpture, and that modern art is an intrinsic part of modern living." The next year the museum began its four-year run of "Good Design" shows, with director Rene Harnoncourt proclaiming, "Of every 100 persons who come to the Museum we estimate that no more than 10 actually accept a geometric abstraction by Piet Mondrian as valid art...but when principles of good design permeate a home, the occupants tend to be more tolerant, more receptive to new ideas in art."(116)

Some New York School artists were proving more tolerant in return. In an interview conducted in the summer of 1950, Jackson Pollock confirmed that with "five or six of my contemporaries in New York...the direction that painting seems to be taking here is away from the easel into some kind of wall painting," and he also enthused about his recent attempts at painting on glass, which he found "very exciting. ...I think the possibility of using painting on glass in modern architecture--in modern construction--terrific."(117) Also in 1950, Vogue magazine ran a pictorial spread touting large-scale painting as an interior decorating trend (fig. 17). Titled "Make Up Your Mind: Many-Picture Wall or One-Picture Wall," it juxtaposed a photograph of over 10 easel paintings hung salon style on an apartment wall against one showing Rothko's Number Eight, measuring eight feet tall, hanging majestically all by itself. A year later Rothko participated in "A Symposium on How to Combine Architecture, Painting and Sculpture," chaired by Philip Johnson, director of MoMA's Department of Architecture, and published in Interiors magazine.

Among Manhattan dealers handling New York School artists, Samuel Kootz was perhaps the most aggressive in expanding patronage by forging ties between the new art and architecture. In 1946 he anticipated the trend by mounting a

show titled "Modern Painting for a Country Estate: Important Painting for Spacious Living." Three years later, he devised an exhibition in which gallery artists posed problems to the architects Breuer, Gropius, Johnson, Fredrick Kiesler, and Wiener and Sert, whose responses were worked up into models for display. Throughout the '50s Kootz continued hatching schemes to solicit architectural commissions. "I watched our artists doing larger and larger paintings and sculpture, anxious for a wall. On the other hand, I saw that the architect was imprisoned in his belief that his pure white wall should not be embellished."(118) Other galleries followed Kootz's lead: for example, in January 1959, a year after mounting Morris Louis's first solo show in New York, the Martha Jackson Gallery opened "The Enormous Room," featuring mural-sized paintings by Alfred Leslie, Sam Francis, Fritz Bultman and Michael Goldberg.

Key New York collectors began buying oversized canvases, even when it meant entirely reconstructing their homes. In the most famous example, Ben Heller hired the architects Kramer and Kramer to overhaul his Manhattan apartment (fig. 18) so that it could fit such paintings as Pollock's One (measuring roughly nine by 17 feet), which he bought in 1954.(119) Toward the end of the decade Kootz was proclaiming victory: "After six years of architectural contacts, all the artists in the gallery...are now busily engaged in many commissions: sculpture, mosaics, tapestries, murals, etc."

The dream of a grand synthesis of the different branches of visual art was crucial to Greenberg's eventual acceptance of color-field painting during the '50s. "'International style' architecture, cubist and post-cubist painting and sculpture, 'modern' furniture and decoration and design are the manifestations of the new style," he would exalt in his last essay of 1949. Here a cubist-derived architecture and sculpture would encase, orient and ground wallpaper-like abstract paintings, and a sense of the detached and detaching frame would thereby be retrieved on a heroic scale. In 1950 he sighed in relief, "We are now beginning to realize...that

impressionism has remained a major force all along without which it would be impossible to explain the concrete aspect of contemporary, post-cubist abstract painting. Cubism is still the plastic base, but color and feeling of the abstract art of...the best painters of this period derive greatly from impressionism." What Greenberg had hoped for--a detached, Apollonian art infusing the most ambitious theory into art practice--seemed to be settling into focus: "Despite all appearances to the contrary, our age may still contain a new principle of unity in itself; I seem to see one being generated empirically out of certain solutions dictated by the novel problems of an industrialized and urbanized society." There was an "affinity between the new style in the visual arts and modern physical science," perhaps all the more so because the new style "relies relatively little on expressive details." Unity would triumph over uniformity, and through a kind of art that "rested on rationality but without permitting itself to be rationalized." Art would reform society rather than be co-opted by it, because it would re-enter the social matrix not as feminine décor but as masculine grand style, "a style that at last satisfies us integrally and comfortably to everything new we have experienced since the 18th century."(120)

It is within the context of this widespread campaign to pragmatically accommodate modern art into middle-class culture that Greenberg's activities from the end of the '40s through the mid '50s should be situated. Much has been made in recent years about the turn in Greenberg's criticism during this time toward "opticality," his growing preference for the glowing color-field works of Rothko, Newman and Still over the thick painterliness of de Kooning and his followers, and his mounting enthusiasm for a pictorial sculpture like David Smith's that stressed its debt to painting. Rosalind Krauss, for example, has characterized this shift as a philosophical retreat from materialism to idealism, and traces it back to Greenberg's laudatory response to Pollock's black-stain paintings of 1951, with their relatively more

elegant, lyrical draughtsmanship. Greenberg's "mission" in the '50s, according to Krauss, was to "sublimate" Pollock's work--"to lift the paintings...off the ground where he made them, and onto the wall," and thus "evacuat[e] the work altogether from the domain of the object and install it within the consciousness of the subject."(121) This same argument has been repeated by Yve-Alain Bois, who writes that "by 1958, [Greenberg's] reading of Pollock's late work will have inflected his entire system and all he has to say about 20th-century art...[he] will be less and less attentive to the materiality of the works he 'describes.'"(122)

As with Thierry de Duve's more sympathetic reading of Greenberg, the problem with this more harsh criticism is that it suffers from a similarly narrowing preoccupation with Pollock. (Krauss's goal in particular is to supplant Greenberg's account of Pollock's legacy, which leads through Rothko, Frankenthaler, Louis and Noland, with her own account, which points instead toward Twombly, Robert Morris and Warhol). Greenberg's engagement with Pollock, though certainly intense, was not as myopic as such assessments imply. Rather, larger concerns having to do with the fate of art in general and painting in particular--namely its possible dissolution in the face of lost material support and social function--haunted Greenberg's every deliberation, and not just over Pollock; what the critic was calling for, after all, was a grand unifying style that transcended the intensely personal. Furthermore, the threat Greenberg perceived was not the materiality of post-cubist painting per se, but how in such works matter appeared to only "repeat itself." The threat, in other words, had to do with repetitiousness, monotony; or, to be more specific, it had to do with passive and feminine decoration becoming the new social identity for art. It was this active arena of cultural practice and politics that served as the scene of reception for Greenberg; not yet had he moved more squarely into an academic discourse where philosophical aesthetics and art historical accounts mattered pre-eminently. If Greenberg did

have a mission at this time, it was at once broader and more down-to-earth than establishing Pollock's aesthetic and art historical appreciation; it was to worry over and advocate for the securing of a plausible system of patronage that could forestall the dissolution of advanced art, perhaps even expand it into the basis for a new overarching period style. Even if ambitious art could no longer escape a facile and superficial reception in the arena of cultural opinion, the hope was that it could perhaps firmly anchor itself within the very logic and structure of the industrial urban environment.

This vision helped Greenberg through a period when, absent hopes of socialism, the avant-garde motto of "keeping culture moving" had begun to lose its bearings. "Authentic culture," he wrote in 1953, "must...lie at the center, and from there irradiate the whole of life, the serious as well as the not serious." By 1955 his tone regained its certainty, and he was able to explain how "tradition is not dismantled by the avant-garde for sheer revolutionary effect but in order to maintain the level and vitality of art under steadily changing circumstances." Painting kept moving, and if it moved beyond its limits, even risked losing its identity, it would do so not through dissipation but rather by transcending itself. Largeness and flatness were now acceptable, even encouraged. In the post-cubist, impressionist-derived canvases he now favored, it seemed that

> color breathes with an enveloping effect, which is intensified by the largeness itself of the picture. The spectator tends to react to this more in terms of décor or environment than in those usually associated with a picture hung on wall.... The limits of the easel picture are in greater danger of being destroyed because several generations of great artists have already worked to expand them. But if they are destroyed this will not necessarily mean the extinction of pictorial art as such. Painting may be on its way toward a new kind of

> genre...and what we now consider to be merely decorative may become capable of holding our eyes and moving us much as the easel picture does.(123)

Toward the end of the '50s Greenberg eventually lost enthusiasm for the whole idea of an impending dawn of some grand period style in industrial America. Over the course of the decade, and partly due to earlier museum advocacy and publicity, interior design became big business, and as it was increasingly mass marketed initiative passed from the hands of architects and engineers to interior decorators and finally to consumers themselves. The 1956 Complete Book of Interior Decorating advised readers, "Don't be afraid to give expression to your own taste in making your selections. It is your home."(124) As the eclecticism of domestic interiors grew "beyond the coherence of style," Greenberg advocated "making work itself the main sphere of culture.... That some number of people now get an immediate satisfaction from the décors in which they work such as they do not from the décors of their homes, and that this is provided by advanced, 'highbrow' architecture, may be considered at least one gain for high culture under industrialism." But public architectural commissions seemed to suffer as well. At least Greenberg felt that most commissions were being granted to inferior artists--Kootz's artists like Ibram Lassaw, Bernard Rosenthal and Philip Pavia. Greenberg even lost all interest in former hopefuls David Hare and Theodore Roszak. "The most conspicuous result of the diffusion of the use of the welding torch among American sculptors," he shook his head in 1957, "has been a superior kind of garden statuary and a new, oversized kind of objet d'art.... Ten years ago hopes were bright for sculpture...these hopes have faded." Smith seemed the one surviving sculptor Greenberg still held in high esteem, but "the art public and its mentors...have not yet accepted his work in a way that would bring prizes, commissions, and the purchases of important pieces by museums and other public or semi-public agencies."(125)

Yet another problem was surfacing for Greenberg, namely the "neo-dada" work that began finding an audience in New York in the late '50s. The year 1958 began with Johns enjoying his first solo show in New York and making the cover of Art News, with Robert Rauschenberg's "combines" at Leo Castelli and Allan Kaprow's happening at the Hansa Gallery, and with Newsweek reporting on "The Trend to the 'Anti-Art'." Artists like Kaprow and Rauschenberg seemed to usurp Smith's idea of "combining painting and sculpture into a new art form that would beat either one"; how they put into practice the lessons of cubist collage deviated radically from the rational grand style of "international-line" architecture and design. Junk, not engineering, became the operative term. It was a conspiracy theory Irving Sandler advanced in 1960, in what sounds like a nightmare rewrite to Greenberg's historical narrative: "The metal constructions of David Smith have been especially influential on the work of the Neo-Dadas.... The line between painting and sculpture gets so blurred that Neo-Dada construction-collages are most fittingly called 'objects'... The size of Abstract Expressionist paintings, particularly those of Pollock, their 'assault' upon the viewer--the picture as environment--has stimulated Kaprow, Grooms, Oldenburg, Whitman, Dine and others to create actual environments.... These artists have transformed the entire gallery space into a stage set." A few years later, Kaprow would smile over such a turn of events. "At one time, modern art, on its way from the gallery to the museum, stopped off at a collector's home and there it looked out of place because it was lived with. Now it is the reverse. 'Kitchen-Sink' art, 'Pop,' 'Common-Object' art, 'Assemblage,' 'Junk Culture,' 'Re-arrangeables,' 'Multiples,' and 'Environments,' united in their appeal to, and often literal involvement in, the themes and space of daily existence, appear absurd and out-of-kilter in museums where they cannot be lived with."(126)

In the end Greenberg never abandoned painting for sculpture--indeed, quite the opposite. Sculpture had rescued

painting just as the crisis of painting had reached its peak. But once that crisis abated and sculpture's services were no longer needed, it was dropped. Now there was no advantage to being "as palpable as the furniture." Only reviewers hostile to color-field painting would still insist on an association between it and the domestic interior. "Never before has mere decoration been presented with more pretentiousness and remained mere decoration" was Harold Rosenberg's response to Louis's and Noland's canvases in the 1963 exhibit "Towards a New Abstraction" at the Jewish Museum.(127) Perhaps the only time a critic sympathetic to such work mentioned its relation to private homes was when Lawrence Alloway wrote in 1961 that

> a good deal of discussion about post-war painting, with its use of words like "ejaculatory" and "rococo," rests on an assumption about its orgiastic and indulgent character. In fact, however, sensuality in painting is simply absorption with the specialized means of the artist (liquids and pastes). The handling of these materials has nothing to do with bedrooms and boudoirs.... It is by accepting the (sensual) properties of paint and handling that the (transcendent) action of discovery, voyage, quest, and all that, can begin.(128)

Alloway here seems to have in mind the examples of Boucher and Fragonard--just as Greenberg did, when he first considered the relation between modern art and décor.

## FRAMING MODERNIST PAINTING

Consistent throughout Greenberg's writing is its tone of activism, of lines needing to be drawn and battles waged. Never were circumstances not volatile, politicized on some level, historically in motion and overrun by competing interests; thus how to advance and advocate the best and brightest, how to keep culture moving, always needed to be

theorized anew. After World War II, when art had to find its way without the promise of socialism as its guiding light, a rapprochement seemed necessary; if not intellectual or spiritual support, perhaps some basic material, economic and institutional patronage of high art could be developed among sectors of the new managerial middle-class. Beginning in 1950, only months after he quit reviewing for The Nation out of growing disgust with the moribund leftist intellectual milieu in New York, Greenberg mounted the first of what would end up a total of 13 gallery and museum exhibitions he'd go on to curate over the course of the decade. This doesn't include the shows he arranged as a paid consultant to the French & Company Gallery from 1958 to 1960.

Greenberg's involvement with French & Company was an odd fit on certain levels. Holding out against modern and international style furniture and décor, the 117-year-old gallery was a bastion for antiques and furnishings in the "Old French" style. But in 1957, aware that, "outside of art firms with huge stocks of impressionists, the most successful and profitable art business throughout the world in the last five years has been in the contemporary art field," the gallery hired Publicity Inc.--run by Benjamin Sonnenberg, considered "the inventor of the public relations business"--to head up a $70,000 publicity campaign to update its image and help launch a new wing devoted to contemporary art.(129) Greenberg had been trying to find shows in Manhattan for Louis and Noland, and in 1958 he even ended his friendship with Betty Parsons because she refused to bring the two painters into her stable. That fall Sonnenberg and French & Company president Spencer Samuels approached Greenberg, and by the following year the gallery was paying him an annual salary of $5,200 to be its "Contemporary Painting Advisor."

French & Company expressly picked Greenberg as a way to shed its image as "the High Priests of the Gothic and the Renaissance" and immediately fit into New York's contemporary art world.(130) The gallery's advertising strategy changed: an ad in Art in America from 1958 still pictures an American

colonial painting hung next to a vintage grandfather clock; in an ad the gallery ran a year later in Arts, a David Smith sculpture now stands next to a Gothic caisson, over which hangs a painting by Jules Olitski (fig. 19). Greenberg no doubt agreed to work with French & Company since the gallery had never fit in before, was so unfamiliar with things modern and thus would be completely beholden to his say on the matter. The gallery had no exhibition history to contend with, no standing commitments to living artists to work around. It was, in a sense, detached. Fittingly, the first show Greenberg organized there was of paintings by Barnett Newman, who was also detached, having not shown in New York since 1951.

Moreover, to design the rooms of their contemporary wing French & Company hired Tony Smith, who would go on to build the new 57th Street exhibition space for Betty Parsons three years later, "the purest of pure environments" (in the estimation of Robert Storr). At French & Company Smith devised a similarly immaculate environment that "bathed art objects in an atmosphere of light."(131) Such a Platonic realm left society far behind, shedding all associations to either domestic or work-related interiors. It was a type of space perfectly suited for a new, post-cubist type of painting that likewise shed its connections to things tactile, that, as Greenberg put it in 1960, "tries to fulfill the impressionist insistence on the optical."(132) The rooms were spacious enough to easily accommodate the enormous canvases Greenberg would arrange for exhibition there, such as Noland's new concentric circle paintings, which a year before had proven too big for James Myer to show at his Tibor de Nagy Gallery, as well as Louis's abstract murals. ("You are quite aware," William Rubin would write Louis after his French & Company show in 1959, "that your exclusive commitment to outsized canvases has made it extremely difficult to sell your work").(133)

Despite Greenberg's increasing collaborations with commercial galleries, as well as with popular magazines

(between 1952 and 1961 he contributed to Harper's Bazaar, The New York Times Magazine, American Mercury, The Saturday Evening Post and Country Beautiful)--or perhaps because of these involvements, in so far as they reflected the arrival in New York of a substantial market and patronage of modern art--by the late '50s he seemed to be entering yet another phase, his third. The audience that now rallied to his views, and that he imagined himself expressing them to, was changing. He talked less and less about the prospects of someday delivering modern art to middle-class homes and workplaces. Instead, opportunities arose for Greenberg to profess on modern art in academic settings; in 1958, for example, he was invited to conduct the prestigious Christian Gauss Seminar in Criticism at Princeton. By that time Greenberg had developed a following of young art historians that included William Rubin and Michael Fried. In a 1962 article titled "A Critic on the Side of History," Hilton Kramer commented on the new direction Greenberg was taking: "There was a time when Mr. Greenberg's articles on the current art scene appeared at weekly or monthly intervals.... His articles appear now at infrequent intervals and seem, as the result of their scarcity perhaps, to be unduly concerned to summarize rather than elucidate a point of view."(134) Greenberg had earlier been writing in what could be called a metaphoric vein, from a "perspective" or point of view that placed art in some relation to--related to but still different from--politics and the ideal of socialism; after this his concerns turned to negotiating a more piecemeal, practical reconciliation between art and liberal, middle-class material culture, what perhaps signaled a more metonymic mode. Now his writing turned synecdochic, concerned to express a summational overview of art as a purely aesthetic phenomenon, a phenomenon that didn't exist as part of some "period style," but rather existed in, and elaborated on, its own inviolate history and tradition.

The impulse behind the avant-garde's insistence on the autonomy of the different arts, its demand that they be

"entitled to respect for their own sakes, and not merely as vessels of communication," was taken by Greenberg to be no longer political but philosophical. What he now famously called "modernist painting" was re-conceived as an off-shoot of "Kantian self-criticism," so that rather than Manet it was Kant himself whom Greenberg deemed "the first real Modernist." Adopting such a self-critical approach gave modernist painting a rigorous theory and method to guide its practice--it "brought [art] closer in real spirit to scientific method than ever before." Beyond that, what bore paramount relevance to the experience of such art, what gave it "scientific consistency," was art itself, the great artworks of the past that made up each new work's historical community. "Nothing could be further from the authentic art of our time," Greenberg wrote in 1960, "than the idea of rupture of continuity. Art is--among other things--continuity, and unthinkable without it. Lacking the past of art, and the need and compulsion to maintain its standards of excellence, Modernist art would lack both substance and justification."(135) "The continuity from part to whole," to repeat again Paul de Man's observation, is what "makes synecdoche into the most seductive of metaphors."

Such a view--that "modernism has never meant, and does not mean now, anything like a break with the past"--was no doubt welcomed news to the art historians who were now flocking to Greenberg, and perhaps no one took it more to heart than Michael Fried. In the mid-'60s Fried was struck by how, among art critics at least, "disagreements tend to look more and more like disputes among historians."(136) According to Henry Geldzahler, artists, too, were becoming more preoccupied with art history. "The artist as art historian, as scholar of the history of art, makes the professional art historian his logical audience," Geldzahler wrote in 1965, "and in the past decade it has been in this professional group that much of the early appreciation of new and difficult art has taken place."(137) On the other hand, Greenberg also made clear that, in order to be "authentic,"

the art of the present moment couldn't just rest complacently on the accomplishments of the past, repeating them passively; that would only make art "nostalgic." Thus, Greenberg continued, modernism "may mean a devolution, an unraveling, of tradition, but it also means its further evolution." Now Greenberg would confidently applaud Still, Newman and Rothko as the "the first serious abstract painters, the first abstract painters of style, really to break with cubism." Moreover, he would proclaim that their achievement brought about "the most radical of all developments in painting of the last two decades"--namely, "a more consistent and radical suppression of value contrasts than seen so far in abstract art."(138) Fried nodded in agreement: "The ultimate criterion of the legitimacy of a putative advance," he wrote two years later, "is its fecundity: whether in fact it proves to have been the road to the future."(139)

With the rise of color-field abstraction the future of painting turned considerably brighter; gone were references to crisis, and in their place emerged talk of "new modes of organization and seeing...which will somehow open up into a zone of freedom as large, in its own way, as that enjoyed by traditional painters during the past five centuries."(140) An exclusive emphasis on color was new, a break from previous painting and its preoccupation with modeling and profile drawing, those old conventions used to portray a fictive world of objects. But this unraveling of tradition was only a means to extend it further. Color-field painting remained tied to easel painting and thus to tradition by doing what Greenberg prized easel painting for doing, detaching vision from the architectural surrounding. Indeed, an emphasis on color seemed to resolve former conflicts, bringing to an end the struggle between the allover and the at-once. Color was applauded for opening up a pictorial depth without necessarily negating painting's surface, "as if that surface," in Greenberg's words, "were enlarged to contain a world of color and light differentiations impossible to flatness but which yet manage not to violate flatness."(141)

As was often claimed by champions of color abstraction in the '60s, it was in the very character of color to both spread along the surface, to not cut into pictorial space like value contrasts but to extend side by side, laterally; and at the same time to evince a motility that seemed to volatize and make that surface breathe and advance. The need for color to unfold laterally, parallel to the wall and thus perpendicular to the viewer's sight line, indeed required ever larger expanses in order to be effective. But that didn't mean surface dimensions would be set by the literal dimensions of the wall; rather where the picture finished would be set by and would reciprocate the dictates of intentional vision. Beginning in the late '50s Greenberg would amend his description of painting's essence to include not only flatness but now also the delimiting of flatness. The framing edge of the picture took on the key task of making color more dramatic than decorative. Over and above its spread, color was now said to advance on vision as vision's momentum toward its object was answered and embraced by the frame's deliberate circumscribing and focusing of the field. Color-field painting locked into its frame; it replaced inscription with circumscription, relegating line and its cutting to the very edge of the picture's field; and together both frame and color seemed to figure and hold the viewer's eyesight, in unison and at once.

Especially for Noland color locked into the frame's synecdochic figuring of eyesight. In interviews he would repeatedly stress the tight connection he sought between painting and viewer, as if without any resistance or remainder. This connection he imagined to be like the one existing between a romantically involved couple: as he put it, "You're involved with someone as long as something is developing, changing or insightful. Painting is the same way." Connection is made paramount: it is "that quality of connection I'd like my colors to have."(142) But at the same time, Noland much more than Louis tended to treat color as a matter of side by side juxtaposition, lining up hues

laterally, extending perpendicular to sight. While Louis overlaid washes of pigment in his Veil series, Noland the same year was establishing relations and contrasts between colors as he separated them out in strict sequence. For example, in Noland's Beginning from 1958 (fig. 1), discrete bands of color encircle a central orb of red; all the colors possess roughly the same saturation and intensity and thus stake equal claim to the picture's surface, and yet they also alternate rhythmically in their progression outward from the center, skipping back and forth from warmly radiating reds to coldly constricted blues and blacks. It is up to the outer-most band of black to negotiate between inner circular motifs and bounding square edge, and on the painting's far right side the negotiations appear most intense, as the black paint seems on the verge of elongating into a straight line that parallels the nearby frame. But this impulse to straighten is clearly no match for the band's much more dominant suggestion of clockwise rotation. Together, this sense of rotation along with the pulsating rhythm make all the circles appear to corkscrew at once inward and outward, as if drilling both ends of the visual cone, bringing the eye into the painting and the painting into the eye.

The solution is typical of Noland's works from 1958, and by the end of the year he would state it even more blatantly: in the confrontation staged by Untitled, 1958-59, between outer-most circle and painting edge, it is the square frame that ultimately yields, as it literally rotates 45 degrees to transform into a diamond (fig. 20). Indeed, it is hard not to see in Noland's paintings a struggle between these two conceptions of color, as if color's lateral spread across the surface of the painting-as-object were being overcompensated for by its simultaneous advance toward and pull on the viewer. But here the question arises whether this forward advance constitutes a kind of spread in its own right, whether or not the threat of perpetual lateral extension is only being swiveled in Noland's paintings 90 degrees, being overpowered and superceded by a perpetual solicitation to

sight, a bidding for connection that can't seem to finish inside the picture, be made dramatic, at once. Phrased more generally, the question would be whether Noland's brand of color field painting really does resolve those problems posed by abstraction that Greenberg outlined in his earlier criticism. Having entirely escaped representation, having gotten rid of overlapping planes or any suggestion of bounded volumes and how they seem to turn away from vision at their edges, with absolutely nothing of its own to keep from vision, the problem becomes whether color abstraction really can achieve a dramatic finality, that sense of form that feels conclusive, even fatal, but precisely through that fatality arrives at self-definition and meaningfulness. With Mondrian, it is perhaps the dense object-quality of his paintings that in the end anchors and stops flatness and spread. Density of the medium, and the object-quality that results, also characterize Johns's paintings, especially his Targets, the thick, waxen surfaces of which certainly can't be said to "breathe." But in contrast, Noland's work, which avoids any suggestion of weight, aiming instead to have the color exist "on the thinnest conceivable surface, a surface sliced into the air as if by a razor," seems much more troubled by an inability to find such limits.(143) This is further born out by the fact that Noland himself has a hard time disconnecting from his work, leaving it be. Paging through exhibition photos and catalogs over the years, one finds that his paintings are constantly being reoriented. For instance, the catalog for his 1977 Guggenheim retrospective includes a pair of images of Lunar Episode, 1959, the two distinguished by a 45-degree rotation on the wall (fig. 21). Noland has belatedly changed the hanging of other Target paintings as well. Diamond paintings too, like And Again, 1964, have been swiveled on their axis, as have certain needle point paintings like Approach, 1966.(144)

What makes Noland's Target paintings so vulnerable to rotation has to do obviously with their point of origin--that famous moment in the late '50s when Noland "discovered the

center" of the canvas. There are over 150 paintings with concentric circles that Noland executed between 1957-58 and 1962, and the vast majority of them are square in format. What defines the center of such a square field is the equal distance it measures out from each of the four edges as well as the equal distance maintained from each of the four corners. To stress the center of these symmetrical fields means disregarding any distinctions between top and bottom, left and right--that is, distinctions corresponding to gravity-bound, bodily and tactile experience--and instead treating all the sides as absolutely the same. The result is to separate out and make seemingly autonomous the visual axis. It also seems to achieve another of Noland's goals, namely to fold the allover into the at-once, as the field that uniformly spreads from edge to edge and corner to corner organizes itself in relation to a single, dead-centered point. ("You are summoned and gathered into one point...[a] pinpointing of attention," Greenberg would say, coining yet another synonym for the experience of at-onceness or aesthetic unity.)(145) And yet the point that organizes the pictorial field in Noland's paintings also seems to stretch back out again as it figures the very heart of the visual cone, the vector of intent that trains beholder to beckoning painting, a beckoning that seems to endure as if without end.

Of course not everyone who made paintings at the time conceived of the framing edge in this way. In 1964, in a one-person exhibition at the Galerie Lawrence in Paris, Frank Stella seemed to comment on the idea of a painting's rotation by mounting side by side two works he'd finished a year earlier, Port Tampa City and Plant City (figs. 22, 23). Both are identically shaped canvases, cut in the figure of a symmetrical eight-pointed star, and have exactly the same dimensions (eight by eight feet). There are only two differences: both have hard, metallic looking surfaces, but one is painted in yellow zinc chromate while the other is covered in red lead. In addition, while both carry across their pictorial fields an even stripe pattern that mimics

precisely the 45-degree notches that articulate the stars' points, in Port Tampa City the stripes run in horizontal and vertical directions while in Plant City they stretch diagonally. By hanging them side by side, however, Stella allowed for the interpretation that the paintings were indeed identical--since if the one or the other were rotated slightly clockwise or counterclockwise, the direction of its stripes would match exactly that of the other. Yet this sort of rotation would have nothing to do with some kind of evolving visual interest, like that between "a romantically involved couple," but instead would be achieved literally, by grabbing the painting at its edges--that is, treating it as a three-dimensional object--and physically repositioning it on the wall. In which case the function of the color would also change, with neither the yellow nor the red allowed to exude some sort of character or emotion inherent to itself; rather the two would function only relative to each other, signifying a purely negative difference that makes possible distinguishing one painting (or standardized product) from the next.

Yet another approach to the framing edge is represented by Louis's Veil paintings (fig. 2). What distinguishes these works is their ability to present forms that, although entirely flat and frontal, come across nevertheless as strongly sculptural and bodily, all the more so because they seem to prioritize their own weight over the onlooker's vision. Color and shape are displayed completely flat, with no shadows or overlap, and yet they retain a firm sense of their own footing, centered around their own gravitational axis rather than the axis running through the visual cone. Rather than float inside a window-like space, Louis's Veils perch on the frame's inner ledge, inhabiting what appears more like a theater stage. No longer does the frame only figure and organize the onlooker's vision, delimiting or "cutting out" a field for appropriation through sight. Instead, Louis suggests another side to the frame perpendicular to our line of sight, a side we can't see but

that we assume exists because the pictured color-forms stand on and support themselves with it. Moreover, because knowledge of this perpendicular side comes secondhand and only through the rendered forms and their more direct relationship to it, it therefore seems to belong to them. The result is an image that seems capable of openly and immediately disclosing itself while maintaining a sense a relative sovereignty from the viewer being addressed. Image and audience stand to and for each other in a metaphorical relation, establishing connection while also maintaining independence.

That such a radical difference between the work of Louis and Noland was never really owned up to by their earliest champions is revealing. By the early '60s the task that modernist critics had defined for themselves, and for the work they championed, had grown defensive, despite or even because of all their stated concern for the future. What they would herd into that future was characterized as increasingly exclusive. "One is either in or out," as Fried put it. On the one side was an allover mass threaded together by what Greenberg called "performance and virtuosity," which "implied conformity with received tastes," a mindless fulfilling of expectations, merely doing what one is suppose to do; and on the other was atomized individual expressions, experimentation and antics perpetrated for their own sake, what Barbara Rose called "mindless 'action' over critical deliberation," a kind of art too weighted on the side of practice and left unguided by theory, with spontaneity counting for everything, in the total absence of any premeditation or forethought. Either way there was no detachment; either art stood as a kind of innocent, felt expression without any defense against instrumentalization, or it stood as already fully instrumentalized, fitted in. For Greenberg and Fried, a key element was missing from the equation, something that would frame the practice of "modernist painting" and thereby separate it out, namely an air-tight theory and tradition. Criticism and historicizing

would need to intimately precede and follow every act of painting. Theory and practice were made nearly identical, losing their "dialectical interchange." Thus Greenberg would boast of his looming presence in the color-field studio, that he revealed the secret of Pollock's post-cubism by bringing Noland and Louis to Helen Frankenthaler's loft in 1953, and that "in 1957 I turned [Louis] back to 'veiling.'"(146) Fried and Greenberg became the frame.

"Variety is not a standard," Fried inveighed in 1964. "The true critic has no alternative but to try to determine what is genuine and what is spurious in the art of our time: he has got to make value-judgments." Yet this wasn't seen as the responsibility of critics alone. But neither was it merely the job of the artist; rather, it was their shared obligation, made so by designating value-judgments the sole, urgent content of modernist art. "The concept of art is, in our time, inextricably bound up with the question of value," Fried wrote in 1964. As such, "criticism that shares the basic premises of modernist painting can play a role in its development only somewhat less important than that of the new paintings themselves."(147) Modernist artists, detached from the New York art scene, drew closer to their modernist critics, a movement spurred by the modernist pledge to "self-criticism." Through this pledge artist and writer, art's manufacture and its assessment, lost all distance from one another, disappeared into medium, tradition and judgment, yet in doing so picked up distance on all the rest, on the unpledged (so that the modernist work of, say, Jules Olitski "cannot be discussed without reference to Fried's criticism," as Lucy Lippard complained by 1966).(148) All became bound--strategically, defensively--into the image of a true critical community, a cultural elite, a circuit of genuine production and reception, theory and practice, without dissociation, itself separate and distant from the larger, spurious system the art world had become.

Against the backdrop of such a tight agreement between expressing and judging, presenting and receiving, the work of

certain contemporaries stood out in dramatic contrast as fundamentally disagreeable and irreconcilable. Johns's paintings, for example, seemed to take uncertainty as a governing principle, to thematize the inability to decide or judge, to fit in (fig. 5). Feeling annoyed that Johns dwelled over contradictions rather than effecting their resolution, Greenberg called his work "homeless." Leo Steinberg said much the same thing, and yet meant it as a compliment, seeing in Johns's work a mode of practice that did not flatter pre-formulated theory but challenged it to reinvent itself anew. Such a challenge left the critic feeling abandoned, but in that abandonment the critic also became reacquainted with the hallmark solitariness of the poetic. "I am challenged," Steinberg wrote,

> to estimate the aesthetic value of, say, a drawer stuck into a canvas. But nothing I've ever seen can teach me how this is to be done. I am alone with this thing, and it is up to me to evaluate it in the absence of available standards. The value which I shall put on this painting tests my personal courage. Here I can discover whether I am prepared to sustain the collision with a novel experience.... It is a kind of self-analysis that a new image can throw you into and for which I am grateful. I am left in a state of anxious uncertainty by the painting, about painting, about myself.... It demands a decision in which you discover something of your own quality; and this decision is always a "leap of faith"...the picture seems arbitrary, cruel, irrational, demanding your faith, while it makes no promise of future rewards.(149)

"It seems a function of modern art," Steinberg continued, "to transmit this anxiety to the spectator." Something like anxiety was indeed what Fried expressed when encountering Donald Judd's first solo show at the Green Gallery in 1963. Here was an instance of criticism and art forming a tight

compact, indeed coming together in the very person of Judd himself, a regular art reviewer since 1958 and now an established artist. Not surprisingly, Judd's theory matched his practice, although not in the way the modernists proscribed. His judgments, in Fried's estimation, didn't seem to imply any prior comprehension of what was being judged. "What has not clearly emerged in the criticism--at least in my reading of it--is exactly how Judd means to discriminate between the objects he admires and those he does not."(150) Seeking specificity over generality, Judd overly privileged practice, with theory never preceding it but only approaching it after the fact, coming to terms with the completed art object as a fait accompli. This applied to not only Judd's criticism but his artwork as well. "I find myself unable to discover," Fried responded to the Green Gallery exhibit, "a convincing internal rationale for the particular decisions of style and structure Judd has made." In Fried's eyes, Judd's boxes appeared hollow in more ways than one: they had nothing to base themselves on; they fled from precedent and comparison, tried to outrun tradition rather than fuse with and disappear into it. Newness and originality were Judd's supreme values, which meant that even "painting has to be as powerful as any kind of art, it can't claim a special identity."(151) The future Judd saw opening up arrayed itself in isolated and incommensurate practices, the only thing common among them being their disparity and irreducibility. Under such circumstances real advance could only be measured relatively, tentatively, making obsolete all sweeping generalizations and grand theories about stylistic developments and the categorical imperatives of traditional media. He, too, considered history a valuable resource, yet its wealth could purchase newness only by being turned down; it was an encyclopedia to absorb without endorsing. Judd solicited all possible comparisons precisely in order to demonstrate his art's incomparability. Originality for him meant inviting, even constructing abandonment.

In keeping with such a stance, Judd denounced the artworld habit of naming movements and attaching labels to heterogeneous artworks. Minimalism was a label he found particularly annoying, and he wasn't the only one. "The artists normally labeled Primary Structuralists," David Antin observed, "are not a group--some of them wouldn't even talk to each other at a party."(152) In stark contrast, many champions of color-field painting embraced group identity and insisted on the shared label "modernist" to distinguish themselves. "Clement Greenberg and Michael Fried have...construct[ed] what is undoubtedly the most serious and fruitful description of the development of modern (as opposed to simply contemporary) art," Rosalind Krauss wrote admiringly in 1966.(153) It could perhaps be argued that, confronted by a society at once overly fragmented and overly unified, Judd and the modernists developed opposite reactions, with Greenberg and Fried constructing synecdochic summaries that couldn't admit to being partial and premature, while Judd celebrated a metonymic individualism that played down such artworld unifying forces as increased professionalization and greater market development.

Modernists like Fried and Greenberg, having already collapsed the metaphoric structure of Louis's Veils with a generally synecdochic paradigm for post-cubist painting, now proceeded to reduce Judd's metonymy and Johns's irony, clearing the way for a rigidly dualistic outlook that pitted belief against skepticism, poetic integrity against rhetorical effects, painting versus the art world. This Fried spelled out clearly in 1965:

> Dada in any of its manifestations and modernist painting are antithetical to one another.... Dada stands opposed to the notion of value or quality in art.... But there is a superficial similarity between modernist painting and Dada in one important respect: namely, that just as modernist painting has enabled one to see a blank canvas, a sequence of random spatters or a length of

> colored fabric as a picture, Dada and Neo-Dada have equipped one to treat virtually any object as a work of art--though it is far from clear what this means. Thus there is an apparent expansion of the realm of the artistic corresponding--ironically, as it were--to the expansion of the realm of the pictorial achieved by modernist painting.... The expanded realm of the artistic may come into conflict with that of the pictorial; and when this occurs the former must give way.(154)

Any similarities said to obtain between the works of Johns, Stella, Judd and Noland were only "superficial." Or they were ironic, and thus a concern to those amused with the ironies of artworld machinations. Painting might bear some resemblance to what it was not, yet it remained aloof by conforming its practice to a definition and theory that arose as if organically out of itself, and to which its practice always naturally returned. Everything else was conferred its identity extraneously and belatedly, not unlike how Judd judged specific objects; such an artwork was comprehended and theorized only ever after the fact, like a readymade, an object standing under the sign of art through the manipulations of publicity.

Not surprisingly, such a strategic division was met with intense hostility by many in the art world who found themselves not in but out. "I have little confidence in people who habitually, when exposed to new works of art, know what is great and what will last," Steinberg was already grumbling in 1960.(155) The counter-charge that was often leveled at modernist critics and painters was that their exclusivity was itself conformist--all they had done was erect yet another specialization; what the modernist painter actually "disappeared" into was just a new profession. Steinberg considered the modernist program to be one more form of managerialism, "as though the strength of a particular artist expressed itself only in his choice to

conform with a set of existent professional needs," while each artwork "matters because it answers a problem set forth by a governing technocracy." Steinberg no doubt felt deeply troubled by such developments: if professionalization was how modern art would finally reconcile itself with society, then the subsequent narrowing of social interests and curiosity demanded by specialization would result in a narrowing of feeling and thought, and instead of completing itself through such reconciliation, art was bound to mutilate itself. But such worries didn't inflict everyone. Henry Geldzahler, who prided himself as a modernist insider, was much more upbeat. "Modernism is...a group research project, the way pure mathematics might be, so that the advances that are made in the field become available to everybody who's working in it."(156) Much the same compliment was paid by Susan Sontag:

> The most interesting and creative art of our time is <u>not</u> open to the generally educated; it demands special effort; it speaks a specialized language. ...The painting of Mark Rothko and Frank Stella...demand an education of sensibility whose difficulties and length of apprenticeship are at least comparable to the difficulties of mastering physics or engineering.(157)

What had begun a decade earlier as a crusade to transform the artist's isolation from society into something positive, what Harold Rosenberg called "the beginning of a new world," had come to fruition in the '60s as the full professionalization of art. The Abstract Expressionists' signature style and its painterly language of the self was now eclipsed by the modernist series and canvases that spoke a "language of painting," a disciplinary, group language with the capacity to, as Fried put it, objectively "signify related transformations of syntax in the interest of saying something new." No longer was it the individual artist who stood in opposition to society; rather, it was this impersonal language that provided a public face for the

modernists' private, professional knowledge, and would serve as "one of modernist painting's chief defenses against the risk of misinterpretation."(158)

On the other hand, the problem also arose that no more than a handful of artists were in the end deemed worthy by Greenberg and Fried for inclusion in their system. It was widely noted that the big museum exhibit "Post-Painterly Abstraction," with which Greenberg attempted to canonize the color-field revolution, was filled with artists whose work he actually cared little for (Al Held, for instance, claims Greenberg "liked only about a third of the people" in the show).(159) One of the artists included was Alexander Liberman, the Vogue editor whose idea it had been to photograph fashion models posed in front of Pollock's allover paintings. Yet Greenberg had no choice but to be inclusive: three or four painters weren't enough to make for a new cultural style. A year later Fried came up with a possible remedy: "It's now possible," he wrote in Three American Painters, "to conceive of stylistic change in terms of the decisions of individual artists."(160)

By coming together as a tight group and adopting a strict criterion--according to which, as Michael Fried notoriously put it, "no more than an infinitesimal fraction of the art produced in our time matters at all"--in this way color field painting sought a kind of unity or at-onceness on a macro scale, on the level of the culture and the historical moment, and in relation to a rapidly expanding, pluralistic art world.(161) Group identity was adopted precisely in opposition to what was seen as a kind of spread--the spreading out of art styles and critical criteria--and in opposition also to artworks that themselves spread out, that deliberately exceeded the limits of traditional media. From 250 miles away, the Washington D.C. painters stood far enough back to get a proper perspective, to put a frame on things. But eventually even this proved not enough. The modernist retreat would continue, branching off into idyllic Vermont, to frequent long weekends spent alternately judging the

rightness of modernist paintings and swimming in Ken Noland's backyard pool, with everybody no doubt reminding themselves that what was being experienced here was a special unity, and not uniformity.

**NOTES**

1. Clement Greenberg, "The State of American Art" (1949), The Collected Essays and Criticism. Vol. 2: Arrogant Purpose, 1945-1949, ed. John O'Brian (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 288.

2. Quoted in Rosalind Krauss, "Jasper Johns," The Lugano Review 1, no. 2 (1965): 84. Five years later, Johns returned to this theme in an interview. His statement has been often been quoted since: "One of the crucial problems in art is the business of 'meaning it.' If you are a painter, meaning the paintings you make; if you are an observer, meaning what you see. It is very difficult for us to mean what we say or do. We would like to, but society makes this very hard for us to succeed in doing." Joseph E. Young, "Jasper Johns: An Appraisal," Art International 13, no. 7 (September 1969): 51.

3. R. P. Blackmur, The Lion and the Honeycomb (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1955), 196, 179-80.

4. Clement Greenberg, "Review of The Philosophy of Literary Form: Studies in Symbolic Action by Kenneth Burke" (1941), in The Collected Essays and Criticism. Vol. 1: Perceptions and Judgments, 1939-1944, ed. John O'Brian (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 83.

5. Quoted in Stefan Collini's introduction to C. P. Snow, The Two Cultures (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1993), xxiv.

6. See ibid., as well as Lionel Trilling, "The Leavis-Snow Controversy," in Beyond Culture: Essays on Literature and Learning (New York: Viking Press, 1965), 145-77.

7. John Alford, "Letters to the Editor," The Art Bulletin 25, no. 3 (September 1943): 271-72.

8. John Crowe Ransom, The New Criticism (Norfolk, Conn.; New Directions, 1941), 184.

9. Clement Greenberg, "Religion and the Intellectuals" (1950), in The Collected Essays and Criticism. Vol. 3: Affirmations and Refusals, 1950-1956, ed. John O'Brian (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 40. In 1963 Michael Fried told his own abbreviated version of this history, which he constructed with the help of a quote pulled from Stuart Hampshire: "In the face of the increasing specialization of interests, standardization of behavior, and banalization of emotion imposed on us by modern civilization, Professor Hampshire argues, it is nothing less than 'a condition of sanity that the unsocialized levels of the mind should be given some ordered, concrete embodiment, and thereby made accessible to intelligence and enjoyment.' I suspect that this task came to be laid on art only fairly

recently--since the Council of Trent." Michael Fried, "Anthony Caro," Art International 7, no. 7 (September 25, 1963): 68.

10. Clement Greenberg, "The Present Prospects of Painting and Sculpture" (1947), in Collected Essays Vol. 2, 162.

11. T. S. Eliot, "The Metaphysical Poets," in Robert Wooster Stallman, ed., Critiques and Essays in Criticism, 1920-1948 (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1949), 51.

12. T. S. Eliot, "Tradition and the Individual Talent," in Selected Essays (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1960), 8.

13. H. M. McLuhan, "Poetic vs. Rhetorical Exegesis: The Case for Leavis Against Richards and Empson," Sewanee Review 52 (1944): 268. On the connection between McLuhan's early affinities to Eliot and Leavis and his later prophecy that mass electronic media would effect a reunification of sense, see Jurgen Peper, "Paradise Regained: Marshall McLuhan's Instructive Escape from History," in Winfred Fluck et al., eds., Forms and Functions of History in American Literature: Essays in Honor of Ursula Brumm (Berlin, 1981), 160-79.

14. Harold Rosenberg quoted in William H. Rueckert, ed., Critical Responses to Kenneth Burke, 1924-1966 (Minneapolis, Minn.: University of Minnesota Press, 1969), 28.

15. Rosalind E. Krauss, The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths (Cambridge, Mass., and London: The MIT Press, 1986), 1.

16. Harold Rosenberg, "Everyman a Professional," in The Tradition of the New (New York: Horizon Press, 1959), 62.

17. Clement Greenberg, "Review of Blood for a Stranger by Randall Jarrell; The Second World by R. P. Blackmur; Lyra: An Anthology of New Lyric, edited by Alex Comfort and Robert Greacen; Three New Poets by Roy McFadden; and Ruins and Visions by Stephen Spender" (1942), in Collected Essays Vol. 1, 117.

18. Clement Greenberg, "Review of Theives in the Night by Arthur Koestler" (1946), in Collected Essays Vol. 2, 105.

19. David Riesman, The Lonely Crowd, abridged edition (New Haven, Conn. and London: Yale University Press, 1961), 18.

20. Clement Greenberg, "American Stereotypes: Review of Cousins and Strangers: Comments on America by Commonwealth Fund Fellows from Britain, 1946-1952, edited by S. Gorley Putt" (1956), in Collected Essays Vol. 3, 266-67.

21. Riesman, The Lonely Crowd, 20-22.

22. Quoted in Richard H. Pells, The Liberal Mind in a Conservative Age: American Intellectuals in the 1940s and 1950s (Hanover, New Hampshire: Wesleyan University Press, 1989), 165.

23. Riesman, The Lonely Crowd, 25; Greenberg, "Present Prospects," in Collected Essays Vol. 2, 161.

24. Rosenberg, "Everyman a Professional," 71.

25. Greenberg, "Present Prospects," 161.

26. ibid., 162.

27. Alvin Toffler, The Culture Consumers: A Study of Art and Affluence in America (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1964), 9-10.

28. Dwight Macdonald, "Masscult and Midcult," in Against the American Grain (New York: Random House, 1962), 12-13.

29. Greenberg, "Present Prospects," 163.

30. Clement Greenberg, "War and the Intellectuals: Review of War Diary by Jean Malaquais" (1944) and "Review of Blood for a Stranger," in Collected Essays Vol. 1, 193, 117.

31. Quoted in Daniel Belgrade, The Culture of Spontaneity: Improvisation and the Arts in Postwar America (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 4.

32. Clement Greenberg, "Review of Exhibitions of William Baziotes and Robert Motherwell" (1944), in Collected Essays Vol. 1, 240-41.

33. Robert Brustein, "The Cult of Unthink," Horizon (New York) 1, no. 1 (September 1958): 44.

34. Barbara Rose, "Second Generation: Academy and Breakthrough," Artforum 4, no. 1 (September 1965): 55.

35. Bernard Karpel, Robert Motherwell and Ad Reinhardt, eds., Modern Artists in America, First Series (New York: Wittenborn Schultz, 1951), 27, 33.

36. Clement Greenberg, "David Smith" (1956-57), in Collected Essays Vol. 3, 277-78.

37. Clement Greenberg, "The Necessity of the Old Masters" (1948), in Collected Essays Vol. 2, 249-50.

38. Clement Greenberg, "Avant-Garde and Kitsch" (1939), in Collected Essays Vol. 1, 16.

39. Greenberg, "Religion and the Intellectuals," 41.

40. Clement Greenberg, "Henri Rousseau and Modern Art" (1946), "Review of an Exhibition of Joan Miro" (1947), "Present Prospects" and "Review of an Exhibition of Pierre Bonnard" (1948), in Collected Essays Vol. 2, 94, 155, 165, 247.

41. Clement Greenberg, "Review of the Water-Color, Drawing, and Sculpture Sections of the Whitney Annual" (1946) and "The State of American Art," in ibid., 58, 288; Clement Greenberg, "The Plight of Our Culture" (1953), in Collected Essays Vol. 3, 123.

42. Clement Greenberg, "Review of What Are Years? by Marianne Moore and Selected Poems by George Barker" (1941), in Collected Essays Vol. 1, 85-86.

43. Greenberg, "Present Prospects," 167-68.

44. ibid., 168, 170.

45. Clement Greenberg, "Review of the Whitney Annual and the Exhibition Romantic Painting in America" (1944), in Collected Essays Vol. 1, 171-72; Clement Greenberg, "Review of Exhibitions of van Gogh and Alfred Maurer" (1950), in Collected Essays Vol. 3, 15.

46. Clement Greenberg, "Braque Spread Large" (1949), in Collected Essays Vol. 2, 308.

47. Greenberg, "Present Prospects," 164; Clement Greenberg, "Review of Camille Pissarro: Letters to His Son Lucien, edited by John Rewald" (1944), in Collected Essays Vol. 1, 216-17.

48. Greenberg, "Present Prospects," 169.

49. Clement Greenberg, "Review of Exhibitions of the Jane Street Group and Rufino Tamayo" (1947), "The Situation at the Moment" (1948) and "Review of Exhibitions of the Pyramid Group and Alfred Maurer" (1947), in ibid., 131, 194, 190.

50. Bradford R. Collins, "Clement Greenberg and the Search for Abstract Expressionism's Successor: A Study in the Manipulation of Avant-Garde Consciousness," Arts Magazine 61, no. 9 (May 1987): 42.

51. Trilling, "The Leavis-Snow Controversy," 172.

52. Michael Fried, "Art and Objecthood," Artforum 5, no. 10 (Summer 1967): 16.

53. Greenberg, "The State of American Writing, 1948" (1948), in Collected Essays Vol. 2, 257-58.

54. Quoted in Emile de Antonio and Mitch Tuchman, Painters Painting (New York: Abbeville Press, 1984), 46-47, 101.

55. Irving Sandler, The Triumph of American Painting (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), 3; Robert Goldwater, "Everyone Knew What Everyone Else Meant," It Is 4 (Autumn 1959): 35 (for Goldwater's discussion of the WPA's impact on Abstract Expressionism, see his "Reflections on the New York School," Quadrum 8 (1960): 17-23); Helen Frankenthaler, in Kristine Stiles and Peter Selz, eds., Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1996), 30; Greenberg and Pavia quoted in de Antonio and Tuchman, Painters Painting, 39, 60. Also see Irving Sandler, "The Club," Artforum 4, no. 1 (September 1965): 27-31; and William Barrett, "The Painters' Club," in The Truants (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1982), 131-59.

56. Greenberg, "Present Prospects," 164.

57. Clement Greenberg, "'Feeling Is All'" (1952), in Collected Essays Vol. 3, 103-04.

58. Clement Greenberg, "'American-Type' Painting" (1955), in ibid., 221-22, 227-28.

59. Clement Greenberg, "Louis and Noland" (1960), in The Collected Essays and Criticism. Vol. 4: Modernism with a Vengeance, 1957-1969, ed. John O'Brian (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 94-95.

60. Allan Kaprow, "Should the artist become a man of the world?" Art News 63, no. 6 (October 1964): 35, 37.

61. Lawrence Alloway, "The Arts and the Mass Media," Architectural Design 28, no. 2 (February 1958): 85.

62. Susan Sontag, Against Interpretation and Other Essays (New York: Noonday Press, 1966), 295-97, 299-300, 302. The publication of Sontag's book in 1966 provoked an incredibly hostile reaction: Christopher Lasch labeled Sontag a "champion of pop culture" who "propose[s] to democratize culture by abolishing interiority and interpretation" ("On the New Cultural Conservatism," Partisan Review 39, no. 3 (Summer 1972): 432); while Barbara Rose recalls, "Sontag was very influential in giving permission to so-called educated people to watch trash. Her Against Interpretation said this idea of hi-brow, low-brow didn't matter any longer, you could just love everything, be positive and love it all" (quoted in Janet Malcolm, "A Girl of the Zeitgeist," The New Yorker 62, no. 35 (October 20, 1986): 60). Michael Fried found Sontag's writing "the purest--certainly the most egregious--expression of what I have been calling theatrical sensibility in recent criticism" ("Art and Objecthood": 23).

63. Harold Rosenberg, "Art and Its Double," Artworks and Packages (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), 13, 22; Paul Cummings in Abstract Painting: 1960-69, ed. Donald Droll with Jane Necol (New York: P.S. 1/The Institute for Art and Urban Resources, Inc., 1983), n.p.

64. Greenberg, "Present Prospects," 163.

65. Clement Greenberg, "An Essay on Paul Klee" (1950), in Collected Essays Vol. 3, 5. T. S. Eliot uses the phrase "main current" when speaking of the prime importance of tradition in "Tradition and the Individual Talent," 5.

66. Greenberg, "Louis and Noland," 95-96.

67. ibid., 96-100.

68. Greenberg, "The Situation at the Moment," 194.

69. Clement Greenberg, "The Agony of Painting," unpublished manuscript, Clement Greenberg Papers, Getty Research Institute, Box 26, Folder 2. The Getty mistakenly dates the essay to the '50s, but Greenberg himself talks about writing it and Partisan Review refusing it for being "unsound" in his letters to Harold Lazarus in the late summer of 1940. See Clement Greenberg, The Harold Letters: 1928-1943 (Washington, D.C.: Counterpoint, 2000), 218, 226.

70. ibid.

71. Greenberg, "Review of Exhibitions of the Jane Street Group and Rufino Tamayo," 133.

72. Clement Greenberg, "Review of an Exhibition of Mordecai Ardon-Bronstein and a Discussion of the Reaction in America to Abstract Art," in Collected Essays Vol. 2, 217.

73. Thierry de Duve, Clement Greenberg Between the Lines, translated by Brian Holmes (Paris: Dis Voir, 1996), 27.

74. Clement Greenberg, "Review of Exhibitions of Adaline Kent and William Congdon" (1949), in Collected Essays Vol. 2, 312-13.

75. Greenberg, "Review of an Exhibition of Mordecai Ardon-Bronstein," 217.

76. Clement Greenberg, "Review of Exhibitions of Worden Day, Carl Holty, and Jackson Pollock" (1948) and "The Crisis of the Easel Picture" (1948), in Collected Essays Vol. 2, 202, 224; Clement Greenberg, "Review of The Seventh Cross by Anna Seghers" (1942) and "Review of Camille Pissarro," in Collected Essays Vol. 1, 115, 216; Clement Greenberg, "Review of Exhibitions of van Gogh and Alfred Maurer" and "Cezanne

and the Unity of Modern Art" (1951), in Collected Essays Vol. 3, 14, 89; Clement Greenberg, "The Case for Abstract Art" (1959), in Collected Essays Vol. 4, 80-81.

77. Greenberg, "Review of What Are Years?" 85, 88. In a long essay on Kafka from 1955, Greenberg describes the author's writing as "all middle" and as lacking "dramatic resolution" ("The Jewishness of Franz Kafka: Some Sources of His Particular Vision," in Collected Essays Vol. 3, 207-09). And yet Greenberg is careful not to let this be confused with aesthetic achievement: "Kafka is one of the most 'modern' of writers," his essay concludes, "but to say this is not to bestow undiluted praise." That the dictates of modernity aren't to be equated with those of art was a point Greenberg often stressed (and one already remarked on in chapter 2 of this dissertation). So when he finds the same lack of resolution that in Kafka's work is so affecting also in the work of someone like Ezra Pound, whose struggles with modernity Greenberg had little sympathy for, he judges it evidence of an outright failure (he complains about "Pound's chronic failure to grasp the reality of the poem as a whole, as something with a beginning, middle and end"). See Greenberg, "The Question of the Pound Award" (1949), in Collected Essays Vol. 2, 304-05.

78. Greenberg, "'American-Type' Painting," 226.

79. Greenberg, "Review of Exhibitions of Joan Miro, Fernand Leger, and Wassily Kandinsky" (1941), in Collected Essays Vol. 1, 64-65. A year later Greenberg would name Miro as the exception to this "rule." Miro, he wrote in 1942, "is one of the few artists of our day able to cover a large area of space so well that the beholder wishes it even larger" ("Review of Four Exhibitions of Abstract Art" (1942), in ibid., 105). Greenberg later revoked the exception in a review of Miro from June 1947.

80. Clement Greenberg, "Review of Exhibitions of Marc Chagall, Lyonel Feininger, and Jackson Pollock," in ibid., 165-66; Greenberg, "'American-Type' Painting," 225; Greenberg, "Crisis of the Easel Picture," 221-22, 225.

81. Greenberg, "'American-Type' Painting," 232; Greenberg, "Review of Exhibitions of Marc Chagall, Lyonel Feininger, and Jackson Pollock," 165; Greenberg, "The Situation at the Moment," 195; Greenberg, "Review of Exhibitions of Worden Day, Carl Holty, and Jackson Pollock," 201; Clement Greenberg, "Review of Exhibition of Karl Knaths and of the Whitney Annual" (1948), in Collected Essays Vol. 2, 198.

82. Clement Greenberg, "Review of the Whitney Annual and Exhibitions of Picasso and Henri Cartier-Bresson" (1947) in Collected Essays Vol. 2, 139.

83. Greenberg, "The Crisis of the Easel Picture," 224.

84. Clement Greenberg, "Review of Exhibitions of Jean Dubuffet and Jackson Pollock" (1947), in Collected Essays Vol. 2, 125. Others, too, began to sense the replacement of easel painting by murals around 1950. See Henri Matisse quoted in Yves-Alain Bois, Painting as Model (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990), 58; and Fernand Léger, Functions of Painting, trans. Alexandra Anderson (New York: Viking Press, 1973), 160-64. See also Pollock's similar opinions as quoted in Timothy J. Clark, "Jackson Pollock's Abstractions," in Reconstructing Modernism: Art in New York, Paris and Montreal, 1945-1964, ed. Serge Guilbaut (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990), 177-78.

85. Clement Greenberg, "Towards a Newer Laocoon" (1940), in Collected Essays Vol. 1, 32, 36; Greenberg, "The Crisis of the Easel Picture," 221; Clement Greenberg, "The New Sculpture" (1949), in Collected Essays Vol. 2, 315.

86. Clement Greenberg, "The Flemish Masters: Review of The Last Flowering of the Middle Ages by Joseph van der Elst" (1945), in Collected Essays Vol. 2, 30.

87. Greenberg, "The Crisis of the Easel Picture," 221.

88. ibid., 223.

89. Clement Greenberg, "Review of an Exhibition of Claude Monet" (1945), in Collected Essays Vol. 2, 21-22; Greenberg, "Review of Camille Pissarro," 216. For a discussion of the revival of interest in Monet's work within the New York art world during the formative years of Abstract Expressionism, see Michael Leja, "The Monet Revival and New York School Abstraction," in Paul Hayes Tucker, ed., Monet in the 20th Century (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1998), 98-108.

90. Clement Greenberg, "Review of an Exhibition of Arnold Friedman" (1944) and "Review of Exhibitions of Joan Miro and Andre Masson" (1944), in Collected Essays Vol. 1, 204, 207.

91. Greenberg, "Review of Exhibitions of Worden Day, Carl Holty, and Jackson Pollock," 201.

92. Greenberg, "The Necessity of the Old Masters," 249.

93. Clement Greenberg, "Review of Exhibitions of Adolph Gottlieb, Jackson Pollock, and Josef Albers," in Collected Essays Vol. 2, 285-86.

94. Greenberg, "The New Sculpture," 315-16.

95. Greenberg, "Review of an Exhibition of Claude Monet," 20, 22; Clement Greenberg, "Review of an Exhibition of Victor Brauner" (1947), in Collected Essays Vol. 2, 149; Clement

Greenberg, "Renoir and the Picturesque" (1950), in Collected Essays Vol. 3, 23.

96. Greenberg, "Review of Exhibitions of Joan Miro, Fernand Leger, and Wassily Kandinsky," 65.

97. Greenberg, "Review of Exhibitions of Worden Day, Carl Holty, and Jackson Pollock," 201.

98. "A Round Table on Modern Art," Life (October 11, 1948): 62.

99. Clement Greenberg, "Jackson Pollock's New Style" (1952), in Collected Essays Vol. 3, 106.

100. Greenberg, "Present Prospects," 167.

101. ibid., 162.

102. Meyer Schapiro, "The Social Bases of Art," in First American Artists' Congress (New York: American Artists' Congress against War and Fascism, 1936), 35; Riesman, The Lonely Crowd, 80. On the tendency to regard commodity culture in general as feminine, see Andreas Huyssen, "Mass Culture as Woman," in After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1986), 44-62.

103. Clement Greenberg, "Review of Exhibitions of e la Fresnaye and Stuart Davis" (1945), in Collected Essays Vol. 2, 41-42.

104. Greenberg, "Review of an Exhibition of Victor Brauner," 149.

105. Clement Greenberg, "Review of Exhibitions of David Smith, David Hare, and Mirko" (1947), in Collected Essays Vol. 2, 141; Greenberg, "David Smith" (as in note 36), 278.

106. Clement Greenberg, "Review of the Exhibition Collage" (1948), in Collected Essays Vol. 2, 259-61.

107. Clement Greenberg, "Our Period Style" (1949) and "Review of the Water-Color, Drawing, and Sculpture Sections of the Whitney Annual" (1946), in ibid., 323, 59; Greenberg, "Review of Exhibitions of David Smith, David Hare, and Mirko," 142.

108. Greenberg, "Review of the Exhibition Collage," 262; Clement Greenberg, "Review of a Joint Exhibition of Antoine Pevsner and Naum Gabo" (1948), in Collected Essays Vol. 2, 226-27. The observation about the frontality of constructivist sculpture is repeated from a review published a year earlier, in February 1947.

109. Clement Greenberg, "Review of Exhibitions of Pavel Tchelitchew, John Flannagan, and Peggy Bacon" (1942), in Collected Essays Vol. 1, 125.

110. Greenberg, "The New Sculpture," 318. That historically the making of painting frames is more closely tied to furniture and architecture than to painting, and that frames were typically made by furniture makers, is discussed in Rick Bretell, The Art of the Edge: The Art Museum and the Picture Frame," in The Art of the Edge: European Frames 1300-1900 (Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago, 1986) 11-20.

111. Greenberg, "Review of the Water-Color, Drawing, and Sculpture Sections of the Whitney Annual," 58-59; Greenberg, "The New Sculpture," 316.

112. Clement Greenberg, "A New Installation at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and a Review of the Exhibition Art in Progress" (1944), in Collected Essays Vol. 1, 213.

113. Quoted in Painters Painting (as in note 53), 65. In the same volume Leo Castelli remarks that the enormity of New York painting in the '50s and early '60s "seems to be a rather impractical to do...since apartments in New York are so small, have low ceilings. There is also a little bit of defiance in there" (ibid., 71). In 1958 E. C. Goossen would continue this theme in his essay "The Big Canvas": "The size of such pictures is not adjusted to the size of the kinds of rooms we currently live in.... The large canvas cannot be said to be a fashion engendered outside its own world of art. Even museums are not in love with large pictures." E. C. Goossen, "The Big Canvas," in Gregory Battcock, ed., The New Art (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1973), 62 (originally in Art International 2, no. 8 [November 1958]: 45-47).

114. Greenberg, "The Situation at the Moment," 194-5.

115. Greenberg, "Review of Exhibitions of David Smith, David Hare, and Mirko," 142; Greenberg, "Review of the Water-Color, Drawing, and Sculpture Sections of the Whitney Annual," 58-59.

116. Modern Art in Your Life (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1949), 1; Harnoncourt quoted in Terence Riley and Edward Eigen, "Between the Museum and the Marketplace: Selling Good Design," The Museum of Modern Art at Mid-Century at Home and Abroad (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1994), 155.

117. William Wright, "An Interview with Jackson Pollock," in Francis V. O'Connor, Jackson Pollock (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1967), 81. See also T. J. Clark, "Jackson Pollock's Lucifer," in Celebrating Modern Art: The Anderson Collection (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 50: "Pollock was sometimes prepared to have his paintings become unapologetically scroll-like or cinemascopic...he was

interested in making painting part of a flexible International Style architecture."

118. Quoted in Kenneth Sawyer, "The Importance of a Wall: Galleries," Evergreen Review 2, no. 8 (Spring 1959): 128. On the 1949 show matching artists with architects, see "Interview with Samuel Kootz Conducted by Dorothy Seckler in New York April 13, 1964," Oral History Program, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institute.

119. See Henry Geldzahler, "Heller: New American-Type Collector," Art News 60, no. 5 (September 1960): 28-30+.

120. Greenberg, "Our Period Style," 323, 325-26; Clement Greenberg, "Introduction to an Exhibition of Arnold Friedman" (1950), in Collected Essays Vol. 3, 18.

121. Rosalind Krauss, The Optical Unconscious (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1993), 244, 247.

122. Yve-Alain Bois, "Greenberg's Amendments," Kunst und Museumjournaal 5, no. 1 (1993): 7.

123. Greenberg, "'American-Type' Painting," 232, 235.

124. Quoted in Massey, Interior Design of the 20th Century, 163. Ironically, it was also during the '50s that interior design became professionalized, and in the process distanced itself from any reference to "decoration" or "décor": for example, the magazine Interior Design and Decoration, founded in 1937, dropped the word "decoration" from its title, and Interior Decorator became simply Interiors. See ibid., 162.

125. Greenberg, "The Plight of Our Culture" (as in note 41), 148, 150; Greenberg, "David Smith," 275-77.

126. Irving Hershel Sandler, "Ash Can Revisited, a New York Letter," Art International 4, no. 8 (October 25, 1960): 28-29; Kaprow, "Should the artist become a man of the world?" (as in note 60): 58.

127. Harold Rosenberg, "Black and Pistachio," in The Anxious Object (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), 54.

128. Lawrence Alloway, "Exhibitions as Imaginary Maps," Art International 5, no. 7 (September 20, 1961): 57. Almost six years later Max Kozloff, whether intentionally or not, wrote what amounts to a direct rebuttal of Alloway in a review of Morris Louis's paintings: "Only his most devoted admirers of the formalist persuasion have continued not to see in such works the impassioned and inflated reference--indeed, enactment--of orgasm." Max Kozloff, "Art," The Nation 204, no. 12 (March 20, 1967): 379.

129. Memorandum dated June 30, 1959, French & Company files, Getty Research Institute, Box 1, folder 6. On Benjamin Sonnenberg, see Robert Hughes, "Dismantling an Opulent Fossil," Time 113, no. 7 (February 12, 1979): 90-91; and Isadore Barmash, "Always Live Better Than Your Clients": The Fabulous Life and Times of Benjamin Sonnenberg, America's Greatest Publicist (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1983).

130. ibid.

131. "Merchandising and Publicity Plans," Fall 1958, French & Company files, Getty Research Institute, Box 8, folder 5; Robert Storr, Tony Smith: Architect, Painter, Sculptor (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1998), 17.

132. Clement Greenberg, "Modernist Painting" (1960), in Collected Essays Vol. 4, 90.

133. Quoted in Liza Kirwin, "Regional Reports: Southeast," Archives of American Art Journal 26, no. 4 (1986), 30.

134. Hilton Kramer, "A Critic on the Side of History: Notes on Clement Greenberg," Arts Magazine 37, no. 1 (October 1962): 60.

135. Greenberg, "Modernist Painting," 85, 90-91, 93.

136. Michael Fried, in Art Criticism in the Sixties (in Art Criticism in the Sixties (New York: October House, 1967), n.p.

137. Henry Geldzahler, "The Art Audience and the Critic," in The New Art (as in note 113), 55-56.

138. Clement Greenberg, "After Abstract Expressionism" (1962), in Collected Essays Vol. 4, 129; Greenberg, "'American-Type' Painting," 228.

139. Michael Fried, in Ben Heller, ed., Toward a New Abstraction (New York: The Jewish Museum, 1963), 28.

140. Michael Fried, "New York Letter," Art International 8, no. 4 (May 1964): 41.

141. Clement Greenberg, "Introduction to Jules Olitski at the Venice Biennale" (1966), in Collected Essays Vol. 4, 230.

142. Quoted in Kenworth Moffett, Kenneth Noland (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1977), 56; and in Philip Leider, "The Thing in Painting Is Color," New York Times (August 25, 1968): sec. 2, 21.

143. ibid.: 22.

144. "To this day, Kenneth Noland continues to reconsider the Circle paintings and their orientation. In several cases... the artist now believes that the best placement is a different position than the one he determined when he first made the work. Clearly this is an ongoing process that no doubt will continue in the future." William C. Agee, Kenneth Noland: The Circle Paintings 1956-1963 (Houston, Texas: The Museum of Fine Arts, 1994), 46.

145. Greenberg, "The Case for Abstract Art" (as in note 73), 81.

146. Clement Greenberg letter to Terry Fenton, posted on www.duffin.net/fenton/louis.html. Frankenthaler has spoken of Greenberg's influence in her studio during the '50s. Specifically she remembers showing him Mountains and Sea in October of 1952: "Clem...said, 'Terrific,' 'do more of them,' 'keep going,' you know, 'you're red hot.' And so I did." Quoted in Painters Painting, 78. Joseph Kosuth has written that "in mid-sixties I found myself at a party in New York standing in a group which consisted of Clement Greenberg, Kenneth Noland, and Jules Olitski. I tried to ask questions of the artists, but it was impossible. Either the artists would turn to Greenberg and ask him to say it "the way you put it the other day, Clem" or Greenberg simply answered for them without even being asked." In Joseph Kosuth, "Writing and the Play of Art," Kunst und Museumjournaal 3, no. 4 (1992): 34.

147. Michael Fried, "New York Letter," Art International 8, no. 3 (April 25, 1964): 57; Fried, "Modernist Painting": 648.

148. Lucy R. Lippard, "New York Letter," Art International 10, no. 1 (January 20, 1966): 90.

149. Leo Steinberg, lecture delivered at the Museum of Modern Art in spring 1960 and published as "Contemporary Art and the Plight of Its Public," in Gregory Battcock, ed., The New Art (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1973), 223-25.

150. Michael Fried, "New York Letter," Art International 8, no. 1 (February 15, 1964): 26.

151. Donald Judd, "In the Galleries" (1963), in Complete Writings 1959-1975 (Halifax: The Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 1975), 93.

152. David Antin, "Differences-Sames: New York 1966-1967," Metro 13 (February 1968): 94.

153. Rosalind Krauss, "Allusion and Illusion in Donald Judd," Artforum 4, no. 9 (May 1966): 26.

154. Michael Fried, Three American Painters (Cambridge, Mass.: Fogg Art Museum, 1965), 47.

155. Steinberg, "Contemporary Art and the Plight of Its Public," 224.

156. Leo Steinberg, lecture delivered at the Museum of Modern Art in March 1968 and published as "Reflections on the State of Criticism," Artforum 10, no. 7 (March 1972): 43; Geldzahler quoted in Painter's Painting, 79.

157. Sontag, Against Interpretation (as in note 62): 295. About this period Thierry de Duve has commented, "The extended series of abandonments, destructions or deconstructions... building up the history of Modernist painting were no longer presented as revolts or subversions, but rather as the establishment of a secure area of competence" (Thierry de Duve, "The Monochrome and the Blank Canvas," in Reconstructing Modernism: Art in New York, Paris and Montreal, 1945-1964, ed. Serge Guilbaut [Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990], 246). De Duve is here paraphrasing Greenberg's line in "Modernist Painting" that "modernist art belongs to the same specific cultural tendency as modern science."

158. Fried, Three American Painters, 46. Writing about "the claims that must be advanced--and accepted--about a profession's body of knowledge," Richard Ohmann stipulates that "knowledge must appear objective and disinterested" and also "its regulation and advancement must be closed to outsiders" (Richard Ohmann, "Graduate Students, Professionals, Intellectuals," College English 52, no. 3 [March 1990]: 251).

159. Quoted in Maurice Poirier and Jane Necol, "The '60s in Abstract: 13 statements and an essay," Art in America 71, no. 9 (October 1983): 125.

160. Fried, Three American Painters, 7-8.

161. Fried, Art Criticism in the Sixties, n.p.

FIGURE 1. Kenneth Noland. Beginning. 1958. Magna on canvas. 90" x 90 7/8".

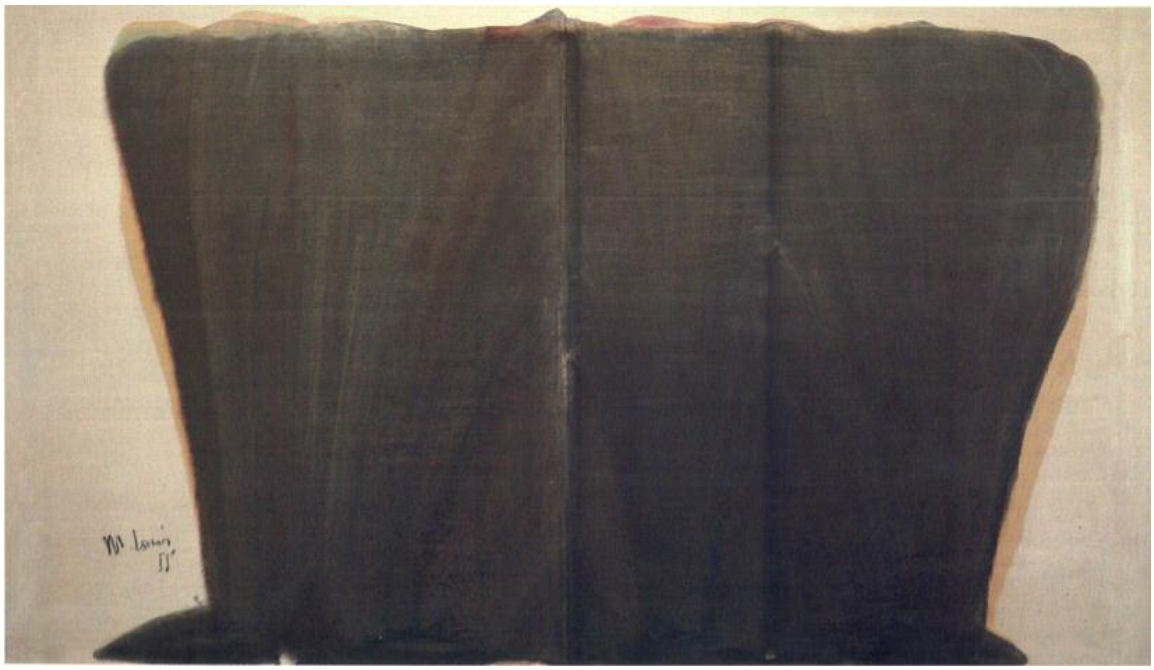

FIGURE 2. Morris Louis. Untitled. 1958. Magna on canvas. 93" x 168".

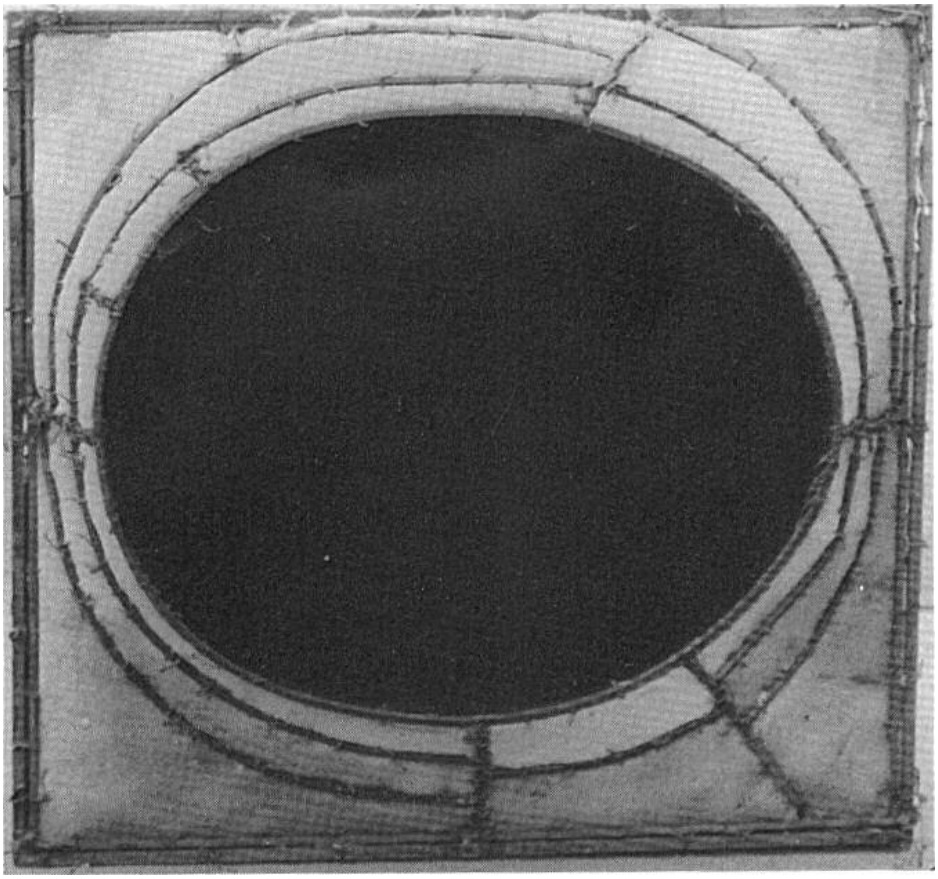

FIGURE 3. Lee Bontecou. Untitled. 1958-59. Steel, canvas and velvet. 13" x 13" x 12".

FIGURE 4. Frank Stella. Installation view. Exhibition at Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, September-October 1960.

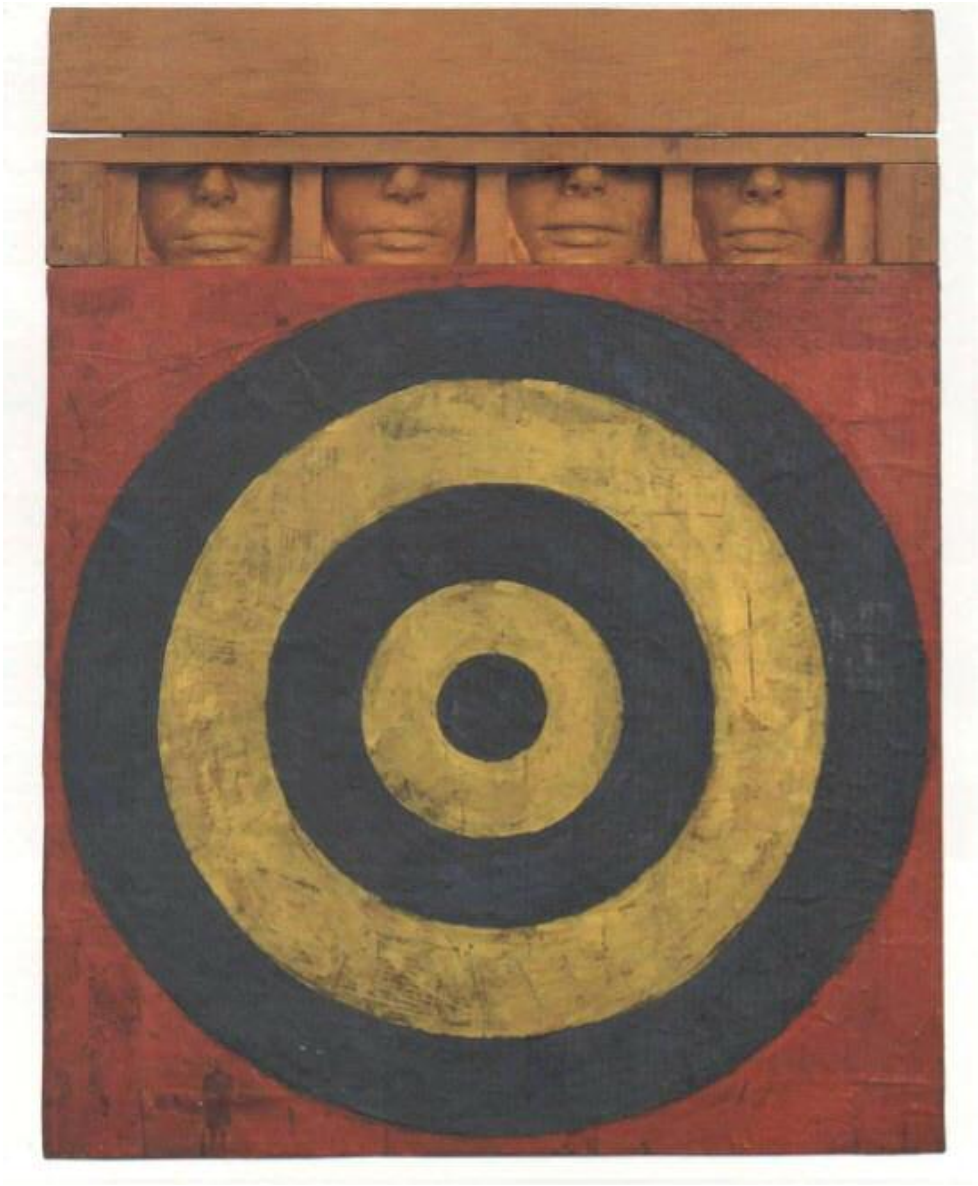

FIGURE 5. Jasper Johns. Target with Four Faces. 1955. Encaustic on newspaper and cloth over canvas surmounted by four tinted-plaster faces in wood box with hinged front. 33 5/8" x 26" x 3".

FIGURE 6. Donald Judd. Untitled. 1961. Asphalt and gesso on composition board mounted on wood with aluminum pan. 48 1/8" x 36 1/8" x 4".

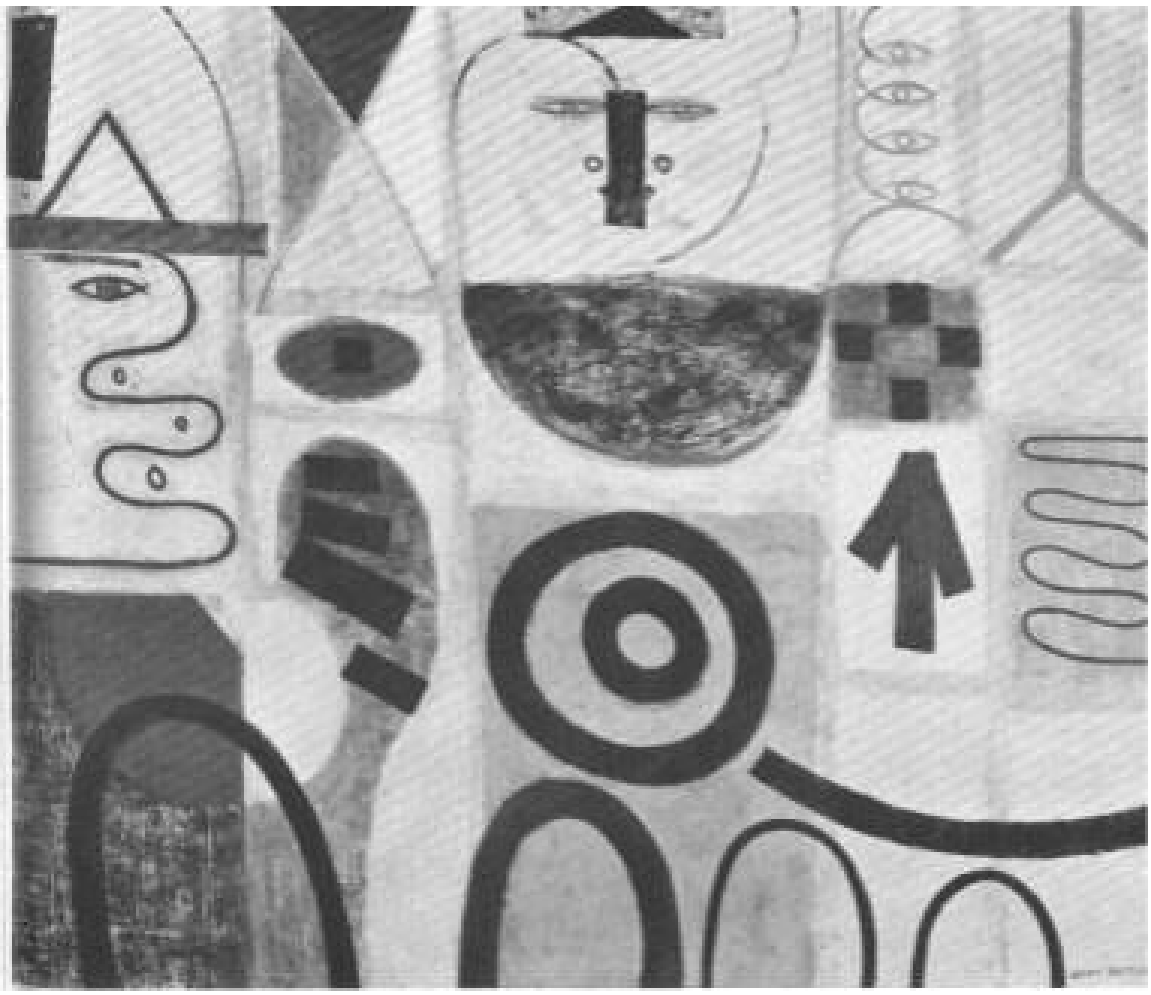

FIGURE 7. Adolph Gottlieb. The Seer. 1950. Oil on canvas. 60" x 72".


FIGURE 8. Container Corporation of America advertisement with painting by Willem de Kooning. Fortune, January 1945.

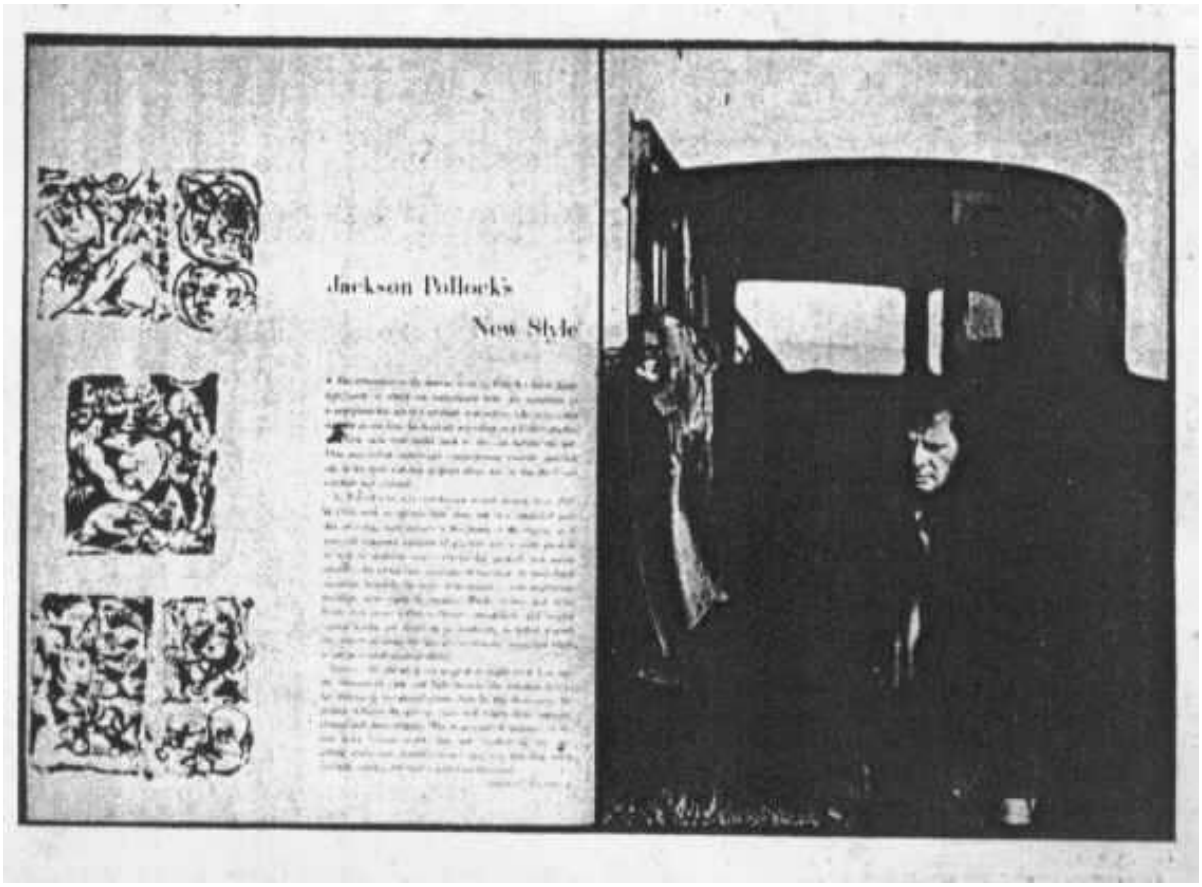


FIGURE 9. Double-page spread from Harper's Bazaar, February 1952.

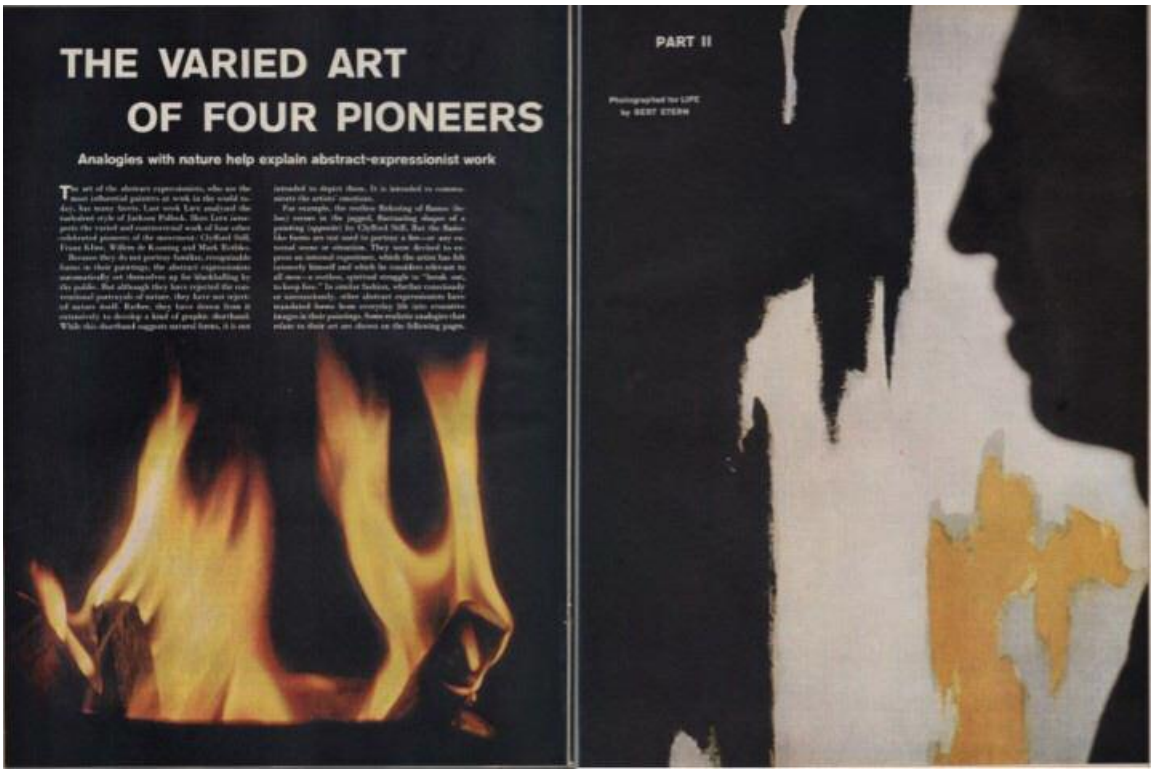


FIGURE 10. Double-page spread from Life, November 16, 1959.

FIGURE 11. Donald Judd. Untitled. 1962-68. Light cadmium red oil on plywood. 19 1/2" x 45" x 30 1/2".

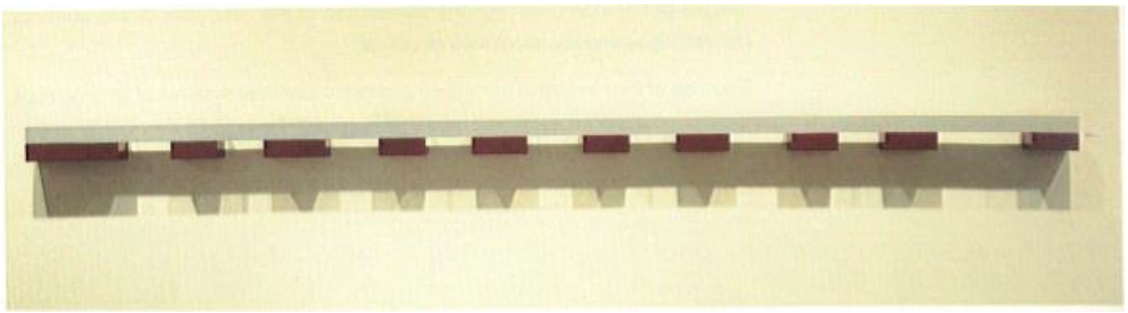

FIGURE 12. Donald Judd. Untitled. 1965. Aluminum and purple lacquer on aluminum. 8 1/4" x 253" x 8 1/4".

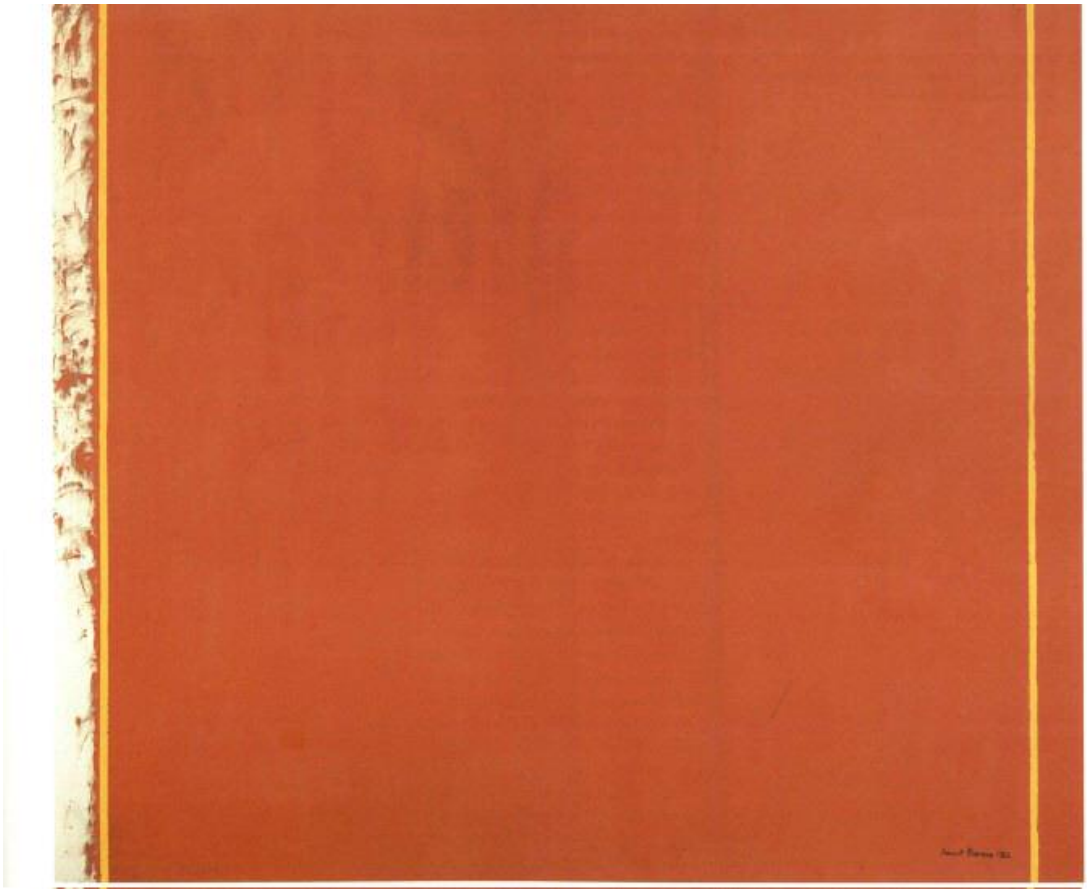

FIGURE 13. Barnett Newman. The Third. 1962. Oil on raw canvas. 101 1/4" x 120 3/8".

FIGURE 14. Jackson Pollock. Number 1A. 1948. Oil and enamel on canvas. 68" x 104".

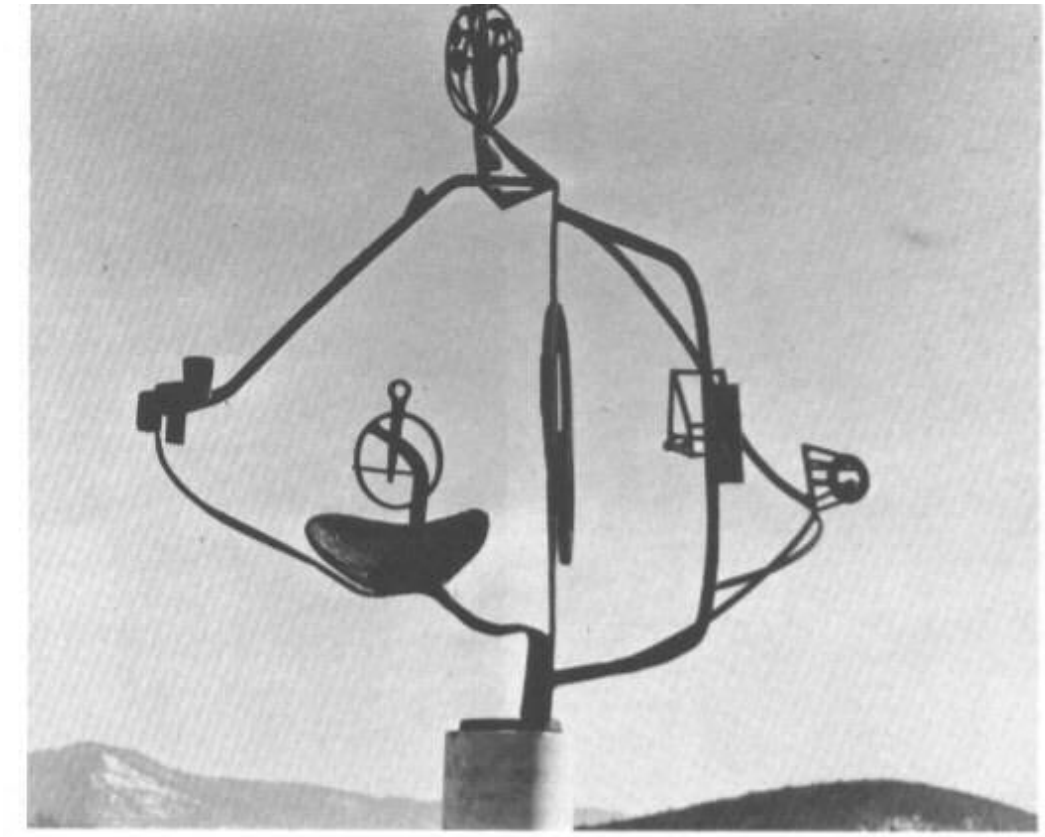

FIGURE 15. David Smith. Blackburn: Song of an Irish Blacksmith. 1949-50. Steel and bronze. 46 1/4" x 49 3/4" x 24".

FIGURE 16. Jackson Pollock and Peter Blake with model for "An Ideal Museum." 1949.

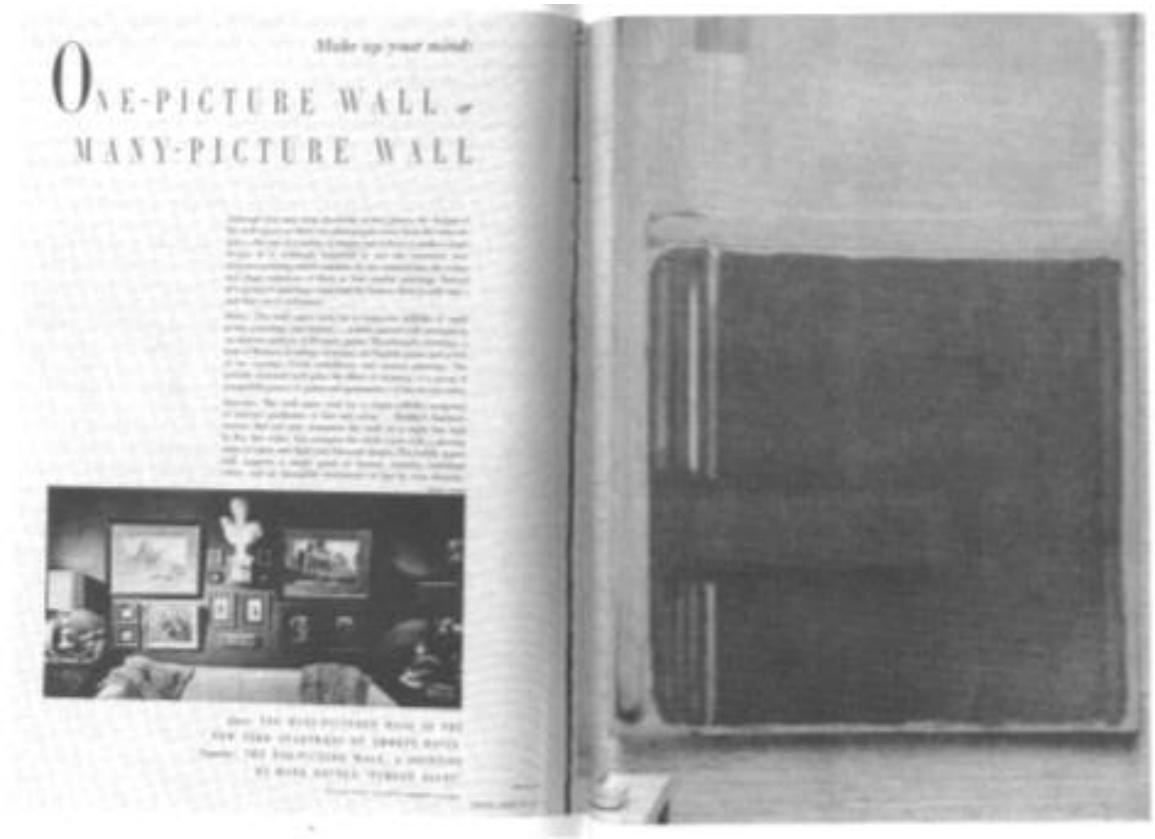


FIGURE 17. Double-page spread from Vogue, April 1950.

FIGURE 18. Living room of the Ben Heller apartment on Central Park West, New York (from Quadrum 13, 1962).


FIGURE 19. French & Company advertisement, Arts Yearbook 3, 1959.

FIGURE 20. Kenneth Noland. Untitled. 1958-59. Acrylic on canvas. 84" x 84".

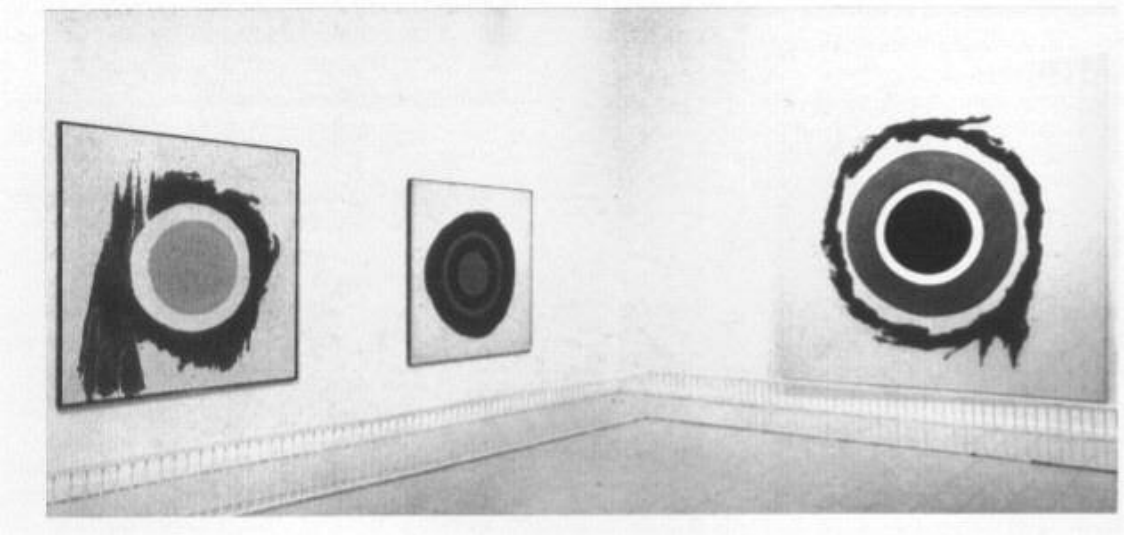

FIGURE 21. Kenneth Noland. Lunar Episode. 1959. Oil on canvas. 70 1/2" x 68 1/2". (Above: after 1977. Below: installation view, exhibition at School of the Visual Arts, New York, 1975.)

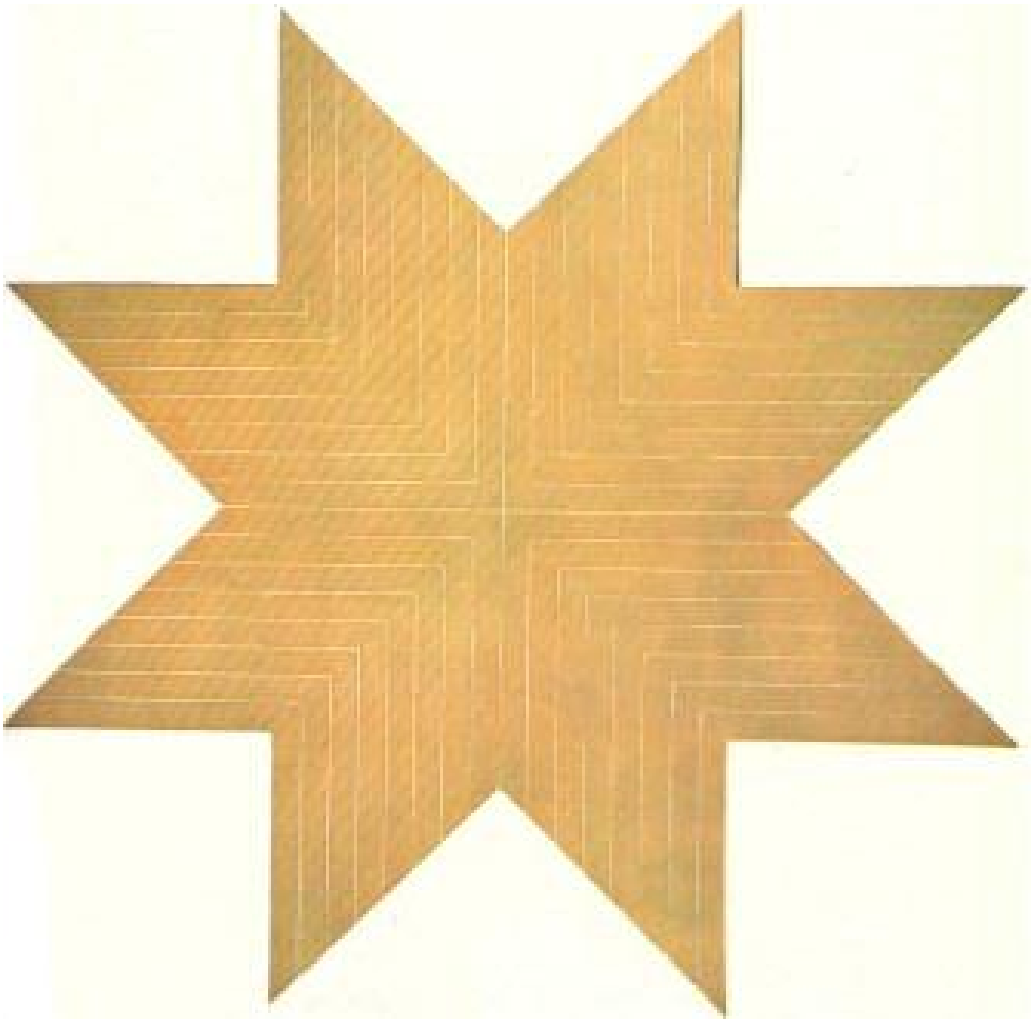

FIGURE 22. Frank Stella. Plant City. 1963. Zinc chromate on canvas. 96" x 96".

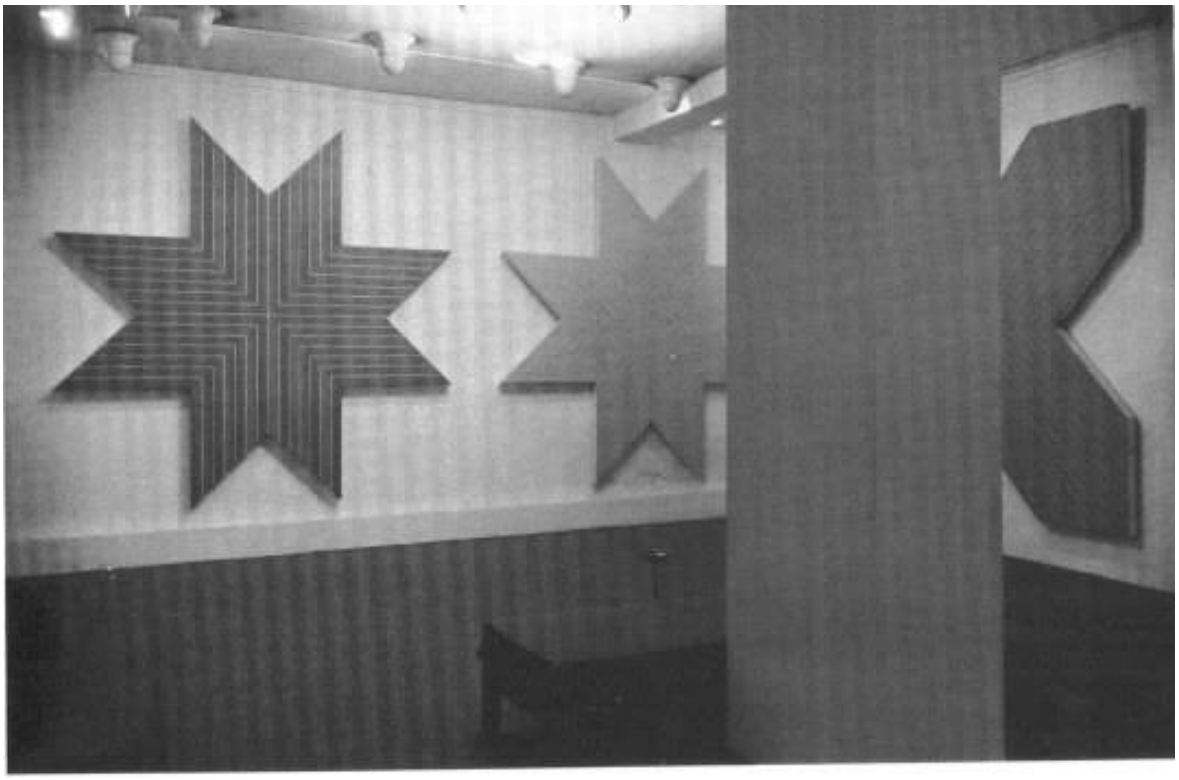

FIGURE 23. Frank Stella. Installation view. Exhibition at Galerie Lawrence, Paris, April 1963.

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**VITA**

Lane Brad Relyea was born in Los Angeles, California on October 20, 1960, the son of Robert Relyea and Carol Relyea. He attended the University of California at both its Santa Barbara and Los Angeles campuses between 1978 and 1983, finally returning to college in 1995 to earn a degree of Bachelor of Fine Arts from U.C.L.A. In December 1997 he completed a Master of Arts degree in Art History at the University of Texas at Austin. He has written essays and reviews for Artforum, Parkett, Frieze, Art in America and New Art Examiner, and published monographs on such artists as Polly Apfelbaum, Richard Artschwager, Jeremy Blake, Vija Celmins, Toba Khedoori and Monique Prieto. Among the exhibition catalogs he has contributed to are Public Offerings (Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, 2001) and Helter Skelter (Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, 1992). From 1987 to 1991 he served as editor of Artpaper, a monthly art magazine based in Minneapolis. After teaching for a decade at the California Institute of the Arts in Valencia, where he joined the faculty in 1991, in the summer of 2001 he was appointed director of the Core Residency Program and Art History at the Glassell School of Art in Houston, Texas. Currently he holds a tenure-track position on the faculty of the Art Theory and Practice Department at Northwestern University.

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